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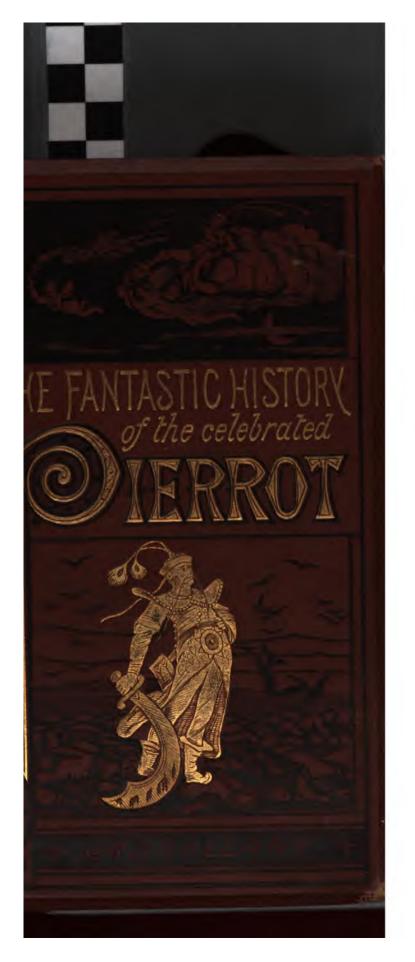
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TO THE STATE OF TH

PIERROT.



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Verily, it was a tumble.

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THE FANTASTIC HISTORY

OF THE

CELEBRATED PIERROT.

WRITTEN BY THE MAGICIAN ALCOFRIBAS, AND

TRANSLATED FROM THE SOGDIAN

BY ALFRED ASSOLLANT.

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH BY

A. G. MUNRO.

WITH UPWARDS OF ONE HUNDRED HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

BY YAN' DARGENT.



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1875.

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FIRST ADVENTURE.

How Pierrot became a Great Warrior.



IERROT was born sprinkled with flour. His father was a miller; and his mother, the miller's wife. His god mother, the youngest daughter of Solomon, the prince of the genii, was the fairy Aurora.

Aurora was the most charming fairy in all the world.

She had black hair, a forehead of average size, but high and arched, a delicate, charming turned-up nose, and a little mouth which revealed beautiful teeth when she smiled. Her complexion was as white as milk, and her cheeks possessed that transparent rose-tint which is quite unknown among the inhabitants of this coarser



sublunary world. As for her eyes, my friends, you never have seen, and you never will see, their equals! The stars of heaven were no better than gas-light, and the moon itself no better than an old dirty lantern, beside them.

In her eyes, which were so beautiful, so sweet, and so brilliant, you could see shining a supernatural intellect and unbounded good-nature. Ah! what a godmother the fortunate Pierrot had! Fairies, who are grand ladies, do not generally patronize millers; but Aurora was so compassionate, that she liked the society of poor and unfortunate people. One day, as she was walking alone in the country, she passed the miller's house, when Pierrot, who was just born, was crying for his mother, and with the curiosity natural to ladies she entered the mill.

As she went in Pierrot stopped crying, and held out his arms to her. Aurora was so charmed that she took him at once, embraced him, caressed him, put him to sleep, replaced him in his cradle, and would not leave the mill till she had made them promise she should be the child's godmother.

On the next day she became Pierrot's sponsor, and wanted, as was customary, to make him a present.

"My friend," she said, "I could make you richer than all the kings of the earth; but riches are only useful to corrupt and harden those who possess them. I could give you happiness, but it must be deserved. I will give you two things: sense and courage, which will protect you from others; and a third thing, good nature, which will protect you from yourself. These three things will not prevent your meeting many enemies, and having many misfortunes; but as time goes on they will overcome everything. And lest you ever should want me, take this ring, which I charge you never to part with: when you wish to see me, kiss it three times

How Pierrot became

and say my name, and wherever I may be, in earth or heaven, I will hear you and come to help you."

This, then, was the way Pierrot was baptized. I pass over the sugar plums which the fairy Aurora showered



in such quantities that the village children picked up 50,000 bushels and a half, without counting what the birds, hares, and squirrels ate.

When Pierrot was eighteen, the fairy Aurora took him aside and said:

"My friend Pierrot, your education is now finished; you know all you ought to know: you speak Latin like Cicero, Greek like Demosthenes; you know English, German, Italian, Coptic, Hebrew, Sanscrit, and Chaldee; you thoroughly understand physics, metaphysics, chemistry, chiromancy, magic, meteorology, dialectics, sophistry, clinics, and hydrostatics. Your have read all

the philosophers, and can repeat all the poets. You run like a steam-engine, and your wrists are so strong and well knit, that you could carry on your outstretched arms a ladder with a man at the top of it, balancing Strasburg cathedral on the tip of his nose. You have good teeth, good feet, and good eyes. What line do you propose to take?"



"I want to be a soldier," said Pierrot. "I want to go to war, kill a great many enemies, become a great general, and win immortal glory which will hand my name down for ever and ever."

"Amen," said the fairy, smiling. "You are still young and have time to throw away. I consent; but if any accident happens don't reproach me with it. These babies of men are all alike," she added, in a lower tone, as if she were talking to herself, "and the most sensible

of them will die without having any more sense than his great-grandfather, Adam, when he came out of Eden."

Pierrot heard the aside distinctly, but it took no effect on him apparently. "There are none so deaf as those that won't hear," says the proverb. His eyes were dazzled with the glories of the uniform, the gold epaulettes, red trousers, blue tunics, and medals which glittered on the breasts of the higher officers. The sword that hung from their belts seemed to him the most beautiful and most useful instrument ever devised by the genius of man. And a horse, as my readers will all easily understand, was the ambitious Pierrot's highest dream.

"It is glorious to be a foot soldier," he said; "but to be a horse guard is divine! If I were a god I would dine on horseback."

His dream was nearer reality than he thought. "Embrace your father and mother," said the fairy, "and let us go."

"Where to?" said Pierrot.

"To glory, since you wish it; and mind we don't break our necks, for it is a hard road."

Who can tell the grief of the poor miller's wife when she heard Pierrot's plan!

"Alas!" she cried, "I nourished you from my breast, I cherished you with my caresses and kisses, brought you up and taught you, and in return you are going to be killed in the king's service! Why should you want

to be a soldier, my unhappy Pierrot? What do you lack here? Have you not always had what you wished for at all times? Pierrot, I beseech you, do not give me the agony of having you one day brought home dead or crippled. What shall we do then? What will your father do, whose arm is worn out, and can work no longer? How, and on what are we to live?"

"Forgive me, poor mother," said the infatuated Pierrot, "it is my calling: I feel that I was born for war."

Here his mother began to weep. The miller, who had hitherto said nothing, broke in with—

"You can go, Pierrot, if you feel that to be your calling which tells you to cut a man's head off, or rip him with a sword-cut, and spill his entrails on the ground. The voice of parents goes for nothing, and never is, and never will be, attended to by children. They believe nothing except experience. Go, then, and try to get the experience as quickly as ever you can."

"But must we not fight for our country?" said Pierrot.

"When the country is attacked," said the miller, "the children must go against the enemy, and the fathers show them the road. But you know well, my poor Pierrot, that there is no danger, we are at peace with all the world."

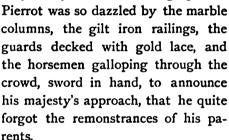
" But--"

"Another but! Be off with you, and go!" said his father, as he embraced him.

Pierrot went, surly, but determined. If the good

fairy was sorry for his parents, she knew very well that a little experience was necessary to upset Pierrot's conceit, and she was confidently hopeful about the future.

For a long time they walked side by side in silence. At last, after some days, they reached the king's palace.



As he was staring, open-mouthed, at this sight, so new to him, the king passed in his coach, preceded and followed by a large body-guard. It wanted five minutes to noon, and

the royal family were going to dinner after their outing. The coachman seemed in a great hurry, lest his majesty should be kept waiting; but suddenly an unexpected accident stopped the coach. One of the outriders' horses started, and the page who rode it, a youth of about Pierrot's age, was thrown against a stone and broke his skull. All the others stopped at the same moment, to help him, or at least to prevent trampling on him with their horses.

"Well, what's the matter?" said the king, testily, putting his head out at the window.

"Sire," one of the pages answered, "one of my comrades has just fallen from his horse, and is killed."

"The blockhead!" said the king. "Let him be buried and another take his place. Am I to run the risk of having my soup cold, because a booby has broken his head?"

This great king argued very well. If each sovereign, having thirty millions of subjects, were to think of each one of them successively, and without intermission, during the forty years of his reign, he would not have a single minute to eat, drink, sleep, walk, hunt, or think Moreover he could not, in the whole course for himself. of his life, give to each of his subjects more than half-aminute's thought; evidently that is rather too little. This was the opinion of the great Vantripan, Emperor of China, Thibet, Mongolia, the peninsula of Corea, and of all the Chinese, crooked or straight, black or yellow, white or tawny, whom heaven has placed between the Koukounoor and Himalaya mountains. As, therefore, he could not think of all his subjects either collectively or individually, he thought only of himself.

By my telling you of the nations under this great king, you will see, my friends, that China was the scene of Pierrot's first exploit. But you need not therefore suppose that Pierrot was a Chinese. On the contrary, he was born some way off, in the forest of Ardennes, but the fairy had by enchantment (the secret of which I would gladly tell you, only she keeps it to herself), at the end of three days' march, transported Pierrot while he was asleep and unconscious, to the banks of the Yellow River, where the porcelain-eyed mandarins quench their thirst, and shake their heads for ever. But let us



go back to the king, and his rage lest he should find his soup cold.

At the outbreak of the royal anger all the escort trembled. The king was just in the humour to crack the heads of three hundred courtiers like nuts to avenge such an insult. They each looked among the crowd to find some one to replace the unhappy page.

The fairy Aurora touched Pierrot's elbow, and he, without hesitation, seized the reins, put his foot in the stirrup, and mounted the horse.

- "What is your name?" asked Vantripan.
- "Pierrot, sire, at your service."
- "You're a very impudent rascal. Who told you to mount that horse?"
 - "Yourself, sire."
 - "I?"
- "You, sire; did you not say, 'Let him be buried; and some one else take his place?' I take his place. Ought not all the world to obey you? I do!"
 - "And where is your uniform?"

At this, Pierrot was embarrassed for a minute, but the fairy came to his aid. She touched him with her wand, and in the twinkling of an eye, Pierrot was dressed like his new companions. Then the king, who had turned to speak to the queen, put his head out again sharply.

- "Sire," said Pierrot, "I'm ready."
- "What, are you dressed?"
- "Sire, did I not say that all the earth ought to obey you? You wished me to put on uniform. I have done so."
- "You are a remarkable phenomenon," said Vantripan.

 "But my soup won't be worth eating. To the palace—at full gallop, too!"

In a second, the coach, body-guard, and Pierrot disappeared, leaving thirty thousand loungers astounded

at Pierrot's impudence, his quickness in dressing, and Vantripan's kindness to him. At the same time, rain drove them home to their families, where the rest of that day, and the three following, nothing was talked of except the new page.

Pierrot marvelled at his good luck. "Why," said he, "if I am admitted to court so quickly, I may go on to good fortune, who knows?"

With these ambitious thoughts they reached the palace. Pierrot was going to dismount with the others, and follow the king to dinner, but the governor of the pages stopped him.

- "Mount guard at once," he said.
- "I am dying of hunger," Pierrot answered.
- "You answer me? You shall have eight days' imprisonment for that. But now mount guard, sword in hand, before the vestibule. Hear your orders: whoever tries to enter without the password, cut off his head; and if you fail, your own will be cut off to teach you how to live."

Thus saying, the governor went with a grave mien to his room, where a good dinner, with a pleasant fire, and capital wine awaited him.

It was the month of November, and Pierrot, decked with gold lace, but thinly clad withal, mounted guard before the vestibule. In front of him the royal cooks kept on bringing succulent dishes in quantities, some for the king, some for the officers of the household; for

the queen's bed-chamber women, for the stewards—for everybody, in short, except the desolate Pierrot. Each dish sent up a delicious smell, which sadly tantalized the unhappy page's appetite.

The scullions grinned as they passed him, and looked at each other with mocking gestures.

"There is a horseman whose digestion will be easy," said one of them.

"A velvet coat, and an empty stomach," said another. Pierrot, soaked with rain, and thoroughly chilled.

Pierrot, soaked with rain, and thoroughly chilled, unable to warm his left-hand fingers, which held the bridle, or his right hand, which held his sword, and very hungry, heartily cursed the king, queen, court, courtiers, and the evil wish which had made him leave his father and mother to take military service.

Presently the fairy Aurora had compassion on his suffering.

"Pierrot," she said, "look in your saddle-bag, and eat." In the saddle-bag he only found a piece of dry, hard bread, which the poor hungry wretch ate in a very few minutes. Thus did he realize his dream of dining on horseback. As he finished, three o'clock struck. Vantripan had dined, too, but much better, and more comfortably.

"Zounds," said he, as he appeared on the balcony of the first floor of the palace, "I have had a capital dinner!" and he began to loosen his waist-belt to breathe more easily.



"Who is that page on guard there?" he added, casting his royal glance on poor Pierrot.

"Sire," said an officer, "it is that young man who offered himself for your majesty's service in so singular a manner."

"Faith!" said the king, "when I have eaten and drunk well, I like all my subjects to be happy. Come here, page. You," he said, turning to the minister of war, who had dined with him, "draw your sabre, and carve this roast capon for me."

As Pierrot came up Vantripanthrew the capon to him, and he caught it so cleverly that he received general applause. People, when they have dined well, are not, as we well know, particular in the

choice of their jokes, and royal jokes, whatever direction they take, are always good, of course.



The king, pleased with himself, sat down in a large easy-chair, and waited Pierrot's arrival.

Page 15.

After the capon came a bottle of wine, then some bread, and then cake. Altogether Pierrot dined much better than he had hoped; but he saw the whole court laughing at him, which he did not like at all.

"When I dine at home," he thought, "the dinner is not choice, but, at any rate, I don't eat other people's leavings, and nobody mocks at me."

This thought made Pierrot very angry. When he had finished, and that was very soon, for he was so quick over it, Vantripan told him to come up near him. "He is under arrest," said the governor of the pages. "Why! because he obeyed me?" said the king in a voice of thunder. "Take his place, and be under arrest yourself for six months."

The crest-fallen governor went down and took Pierrot's place amid the gibes of the whole court. Every one thought Vantripan's justice excellent.

The king, pleased with himself, sat down in a large easy-chair, and waited Pierrot's arrival. By his side, in another easy-chair near the fire, sat the queen, of whom we have not yet spoken, and who was rather tall, very white, very fat, and of whom the chamber-women said they could not tell whether she was more wicked than stupid, or more stupid than wicked.

Behind her, standing first on one foot and then on the other, stood the Princess Bandoline, her daughter, called by the courtiers the Queen of Beauty. She certainly was very beautiful, but she was still more proud, and

considered the race of Vantripan as the most illustrious of all royal races, and herself as the most illustrious member of that race. On the other side of the chimney-piece, the heir presumptive to the crown sat and warmed himself—Prince Horribilis—as ugly and wicked as an ape. He was his mother's pride and joy: she only saw in him a winning and sharp-sighted disposition; but he already frightened those who looked forward with fear to being his subjects.

The courtiers stood behind the royal family in a semicircle, and seemed to wait for Pierrot as if they were drawn up in battle array.

He came, and presented himself simply and without embarrassment. He had never seen the court, but the education the fairy Aurora had given him put him at his ease at once with everyone he saw.

When within a few paces of the king he stopped modestly. "Come near me, you rascal," said the king gaily. "Where do you come from? I have never seen you before."

"Sire," said Pierrot, "the sun does not look at all men, but all men look at the sun."

This answer had the best effect. Vantripan, flattered at being compared to the sun, crossed his hands over his stomach complacently. As for Pierrot, he had answered with flattery because he was anxious not to give a more direct answer. Among all these grandees he felt it would not sound well to say, "I am Pierrot, son of Pierre the

miller and Pierrette his wife." This honest but modest genealogy would have made all the court laugh. Pierrot did not disown his family, but he did not talk about it: it was the beginning of his ingratitude.

However it came about, Pierrot got on wonderfully after the first few words. The queen put several questions to him, and found his answers very apt. Prince Horribilis said several unkind things to him, which were firmly put aside by Pierrot, without his daring to make reply to such a dangerous adversary. Princess Bandoline herself deigned to take her eyes from the mirror in which she was admiring herself, and, after looking at him some time with an eye-glass, she leant towards her mother and said, loud enough for Pierrot to hear—

"The little man is rather good-looking."

This was a signal for compliments. All the court rushed to Pierrot to embrace him. He did not know how to rid himself of the crowd of friends acquired so suddenly; but he extricated himself courteously enough, thanks to the fairy Aurora, who, without showing herself, whispered all his answers to him; for she was ready to help him to his fortune, that he might make his lesson perfect.

Vantripan's voice put a stop to the noise.

"Pierrot," said he, "you please me, and I hereby attach you to my sacred person, and I give you a company of my guards."

"It is evident," thought Pierrot, "that I was born

with a silver spoon in my mouth. Who would have said such a thing to me in the forest of Ardennes?"

He at once knelt to the king, kissed his right hand, and that of the queen, and Princess Bandoline. As for Prince Horribilis, directly Pierrot advanced for the same



ceremony with him, he gave him such a fillip in the nose, that the unhappy page recoiled some steps.

- "What's the matter?" said Vantripan.
- "Your new captain has hurt his nose," said Horribilis at once.

Pierrot dared not contradict him.

"How witty you are, dear Horribilis," said the queen, who saw him give the fillip.

"Tolerably," replied the beautiful Bandoline, negligently, as she smoothed her hair with her snow-white fingers.

"Come," said Vantripan, getting up, "we have worked enough to-day. Shall we have a little refreshment now?"

Everyone followed, even Pierrot, who supped with the captains of the guard.

On the morrow he began his duties, took horse and sword exercise, and showed considerable skill.

He soon surpassed his comrades, and thus deprived himself of the few friends his rapid good fortune had left him with. Pierrot thought he could easily repair the loss; but he was not yet accustomed to the air of the court, and the way of the world.

A month after Pierrot had arrived, a rumour spread that the giant Pantafilando, emperor of the Unknown Isles, having heard of Bandoline's beauty, had asked her hand in marriage. Everyone knows that the Unknown Isles, like the famous Sancho Panza's island of Barataria, are situated on terra firma five hundred leagues north of the Atlas mountains, on the borders of Kamtschatka. We know, too, that they are called "Unknown" because of their great distance by sea, and because of the fishes, who have never been known to speak of them. I may, perhaps, have an opportunity later on of giving some details of that new geography which I discovered in the books of magic of the

wizard Alcofribas. The magician's description begins thus:

E m がまる トスまり

which means in the language which the devil and his colleagues use for such like communications—

" Hrhadhaghâ, mhushkhokhinhgûm Bhahratâ, Abbrakhadhabra;"

and in English means-

"Listen all, great and small, To him who eats up children."

But let us go back to the offer of marriage by Pantafilando. This great prince never dreamt that it could be refused, so he came to make it in person at the head of a hundred thousand horsemen, who, sword in hand, entered the capital of China, and accompanied him on horseback to the grand staircase of the king's palace.

As it happened, Pierrot was on guard that day with his company. He was a little astonished at the equipage, and came down the stairs to hold the horse's bridle while the giant and his suite dismounted. Pantafilando, giving his horse to a black groom, went up side by side with Pierrot. At the last step Pierrot looked round and saw that the hundred thousand Tartars were following their prince into the palace. He stopped, and said to the giant,—

"Sire, his majesty, the King of China, will no doubt be

very happy to give you hospitality, but it will be very difficult to lodge all these gallant horsemen."

"Well," said Pantafilando cheerfully, "those who cannot come in must stop out. Moreover, my soldiers are not particular. You are not, my friends, are you?"

"No, no!" cried the hundred thousand Tartars at the same time, with a voice of thunder. "We are not particular. We will rest anywhere for a little."

"Have you got the mange?" cried Pantafilando.

Pierrot looked round him. The company he commanded was only a hundred men, who trembled at the sight of Pantafilando alone. To begin fighting and obey his orders would have been folly: it would result in steeping the capital of the empire in blood. To disobey his orders would be to lose his head, and Pierrot knew well enough that the great Vantripan would not let him off, if it were only to work off the terror that the emperor of the Unknown Isles inspired in him.

"What does this long-legged fellow make such a scene for?" said he. "If he wants to marry, are there not plenty of girls in his own country? And after all, what's a woman? She is a creature smaller than we are, more

[&]quot; No."

[&]quot;The scurvy?"

[&]quot; No."

[&]quot;The plague?"

[&]quot; No."

[&]quot;Then come in."

talkative, more scandal-loving, more idle, perhaps betterlooking, having more petticoats but no beard. Is she worth a massacre of hundreds of thousands of men, or a rebellion throughout the land?"



When his thoughts reached this point, he felt a sharp pain as if some one were pulling his ears. It was the fairy Aurora, who had overheard the monologue.

"Pierrot," she said, "I have a great mind to leave you in the lurch, as you are not man enough for an emer-

gency. Do you know that beautiful line of M. Legouvé's—

'Speak well of the sex that gave you your mother'?"

"Ah!" said the poor captain, "did M. Legouvé ever find himself face to face with the ferocious Pantafilando and his hundred thousand Tartars?"

"Leave it to me, and don't worry yourself about the Tartars."

At that minute she appeared before the giant as a maid of honour, such as he had never seen. You can imagine what the fairy Aurora would be in such a guise. The most beautiful of Eve's daughters were, after her, like rough flints compared with the pure diamonds of Golconda. She was a Grace, a light, a divinity. Everything about her appeared rosy, transparent, and clear, like a drop of milk coloured by the sun's rays. She looked on all the hundred thousand Tartars, and they all, with one accord, fell to the earth. Pantafilando himself was smitten to the bottom of his heart. suddenly felt himself pacified, softened, and attacked with great joy, of which he knew not the cause. As for Pierrot, he was transported to the skies with delight. He no longer feared the giant or anyone else, nor did he fear to carry out his godmother's orders at once.

"Sire," she said to Pantafilando, "my mistress, Princess Bandoline, who has long heard of your exploits, is most anxious to see you. But she begs you will enter

the palace alone with two or three officers. You should see your bride in holiday attire, not in armour."

"My child," said the huge Pantafilando, "if your mistress has half your beauty, my heart and hand are



hers: but, without going further, if you like to marry me I will make you empress of the Unknown Isles on the spot, and if you desire it in the least, I will add the kingdom of China, which I and my Tartars will devour in an instant. Is it not so, my friends?" he said, turning to his escort.

"Yes, yes," cried the hundred thousand Tartars with one voice, shaking their jaws like castanets, "we will devour China, and all its people."

This army was so admirably disciplined that each soldier ate, drank, slept, and spoke at the same hour and minute as his comrades. It was a model army. Every morning they were told what they were to think about during the day, and truly there was no example of a soldier ever thinking contrary to the orders of his superior officer the least in the world.

"Sire," replied the fairy, smiling, "such honour does not belong to me; but allow me to announce your arrival to my mistress;" and she disappeared.

"Zounds!" said the giant, licking his lips, like a cat does after her dinner, "what's your name, captain?"

"Pierrot, sire."

"Zounds! Captain Pierrot, by the great Mandricard, my ancestor, first emperor of the Unknown Isles, that's a pretty girl, and I will oblige her. Holloa! three generals here! Let them follow me, and the rest remount and await my orders, lance in rest! Pierrot, you show me the road."

Pierrot did not invite him, but he walked straight into the dining-hall, which was Vantripan's audience chamber as well. The doorway not being more than sixty feet high, Pantafilando, who walked without taking care, knocked his head against the top, and went in cursing horribly. "May thousands of millions of shells overturn this palace on the heads of those who built it and live in it!" he cried, in so loud a voice that all the glasses in the hall rang again.

"My eye!" said Pierrot, "matters look serious."

Vantripan was on his throne; his family beside him with all the court, but at the first sound of Pantafilando's voice all the ladies fled, seized with panic. The courtiers wanted to fly too; but as the doors were too narrow to admit everybody, they were forced, as they could not fly, to make the best of their ill-luck.

"What officer is on guard to-day?" cried Vantripan in a determined voice.

"I, sire," said Pierrot, who had regained all his coolness.

"What were your orders?"

"To cut off the head of any who entered without permission."

"Well, why didn't you cut off this great Tartar's head, and why did you let the first comer enter?"

Pierrot was going to answer, but the giant interrupted him.

"The first comer!" cried Pantafilando. "Ay, certes! the first comer of a hundred thousand Tartars, who are only waiting my signal to smash you into a thousand pieces; you and your china city, and your rascally subjects, none of whom dare look me in the face!"

"Pray take a seat, monsignore," said Vantripan, offering

his own arm-chair to the giant, "and excuse the incivility of my officers, who did not perhaps treat you with the respect due to your rank. And, by the way, sir, to whom have I the honour of speaking?"

"Ah, ha! you old humbug," said the noisy Pantafilando, "you don't know me; but my appearance told you I was an illustrious guest. I am the Giant Pantafilando, so celebrated in history; Pantafilando, emperor of the Unknown Isles, lord of the seas which surround the pole, and the snows which cover the Atlas mountains; Pantafilando, who has conquered Beloochistan, Mazanderan, and Mongolistan; who has made Hindostan and Cochin China tremble; who makes Turks and Moors as dumb as fishes, and before whom the earth trembles like a tree in a blast, and the ocean becomes motionless with terror. I am Pantafilando—the invincible Pantafilando!"

During this conversation all the courtiers were dying with fear; Pierrot alone looked at the giant without blanching.

"He is a great blusterer; but his red beard, curling moustaches, and broken-kettle voice don't frighten me."

"And to what happy circumstance do we owe the pleasure of seeing you?" said Vantripan.

"I come to ask your daughter's hand in marriage,

—Bandoline, the Queen of Beauty!"

"I give it you with pleasure," cried Vantripan. "She could not find a husband more worthy of her. She is yours, together with half my kingdom."

"I am delighted!" cried Pantafilando, "and the dowry pleases me no less than the bride. Between ourselves, old Vantripan, you are a little too aged to govern such an empire much longer, and you will do well to rest. In a united family a son-in-law is like a son. Is not everything in common between a father and his children? China is therefore in common between us. Then when a good thing is shared by two people, if one of them is paralysed, the other must administer the common property. You are paralysed in spirit and broken in body. Therefore I, who am whole in body and spirit, I take your place in the government and the administration of the kingdom. It is a heavy burden, but, with the help of heaven, I hope to support it."

"But I am not paralysed," Vantripan tried to explain.

"Not paralysed!" said Pantafilando, feigning astonishment. "Then I am misinformed. If you are not, draw your sword and defend yourself."

"Alas, sire," said poor Vantripan sadly. "I am paralysed, consumptive, and in decline if you like. Take my states, but don't hurt me!"

"Hurt you!" said Pantafilando, "hurt my tenderly-loved father-in-law? Heaven forbid! You have not a more faithful friend than I am, now my rights to the throne of China are recognized. What do I want? why, only peace, tranquillity, and the maintenance of order, and the welfare of honest folk."

Prince Horribilis, more terrified than his father, had

heard this dialogue without saying a word; but when he saw the audacity and the success of Pantafilando, anger gave him courage, and he came forward to the middle of the hall.

"You forget," he said to the giant, "that the Salic



law obtains in China, and that the crown cannot come to my sister, as she is only a woman."

"And I—am I a woman?" cried Pantafilando, in a voice of thunder. "Come, you worm, if you dare to dispute the crown with me, I'll cut you in two with one stroke!"

With these words he seized his scimitar, which was forty feet long, and which twenty strong men could not lift. Horribilis, trembling, ran to hide himself behind the Minister of War, who hid himself behind Princess Bandoline's chair. Taking this sign of fear as a sign of submission, the giant continued in a milder tone—

"Chinese and Tartars, since Providence has seen fit to call me, however unworthy, to the government of this fair country, I swear to fulfil my duties as sovereign religiously, and demand that you shall swear fidelity to me, as well as to my august spouse, the beauteous Bandoline."

"We swear," cried the whole assembly with the enthusiasm usual on such occasions. Pierrot said nothing.

The giant knelt, and was going to kiss his betrothed's hand: she, frightened at seeing herself joined to such a man, could not help hiding her face with her hands and weeping.

"No prudery or affectation!" cried Pantafilando, "or by heaven! I will—"

"What will you do?" said Pierrot in a tone which drew the attention of all to him.

Till now our friend had prudently held his tongue. At bottom he really cared very little whether Vantripan or Pantafilando reigned over China. "What does it matter to me?" he thought: "Vantripan has nominated me captain of his guards, and I am ready to fight for him if he gives me the signal; but if he does not call me to his help, lets himself be dethroned, and prefers

peace to war, why should I get knocked about for him? if the Chinese put up with Tartars, why should not I?" These thoughts made him keep neutral till he saw Bandoline begin to weep. And here I must tell of a weakness of Pierrot's.

He was in love with the princess. I am very sorry for it, for Pierrot was only a peasant; and if we see kings marry shepherdesses, we very rarely see queens marry shepherds. But love knows no reason, and Pierrot passed all the nights he was on guard watching under the window of the too-much-adored Bandoline. He loved her because she was beautiful, and also—though he did not admit it—because she was the king's daughter, and had magnificent clothes.

Pierrot used to say, "I am a captain, I shall be a general, conquer the enemy, and take a kingdom, and then I will offer it to the fair Bandoline with my hand."

He did not tell his project to his godmother, who was generally his confidante, but she guessed it.

"The moth will burn itself in the candle," she said; "so much the worse for it. Man never becomes wise save at his own cost. It is not I that made the law, but I don't want to help him to break it."

The amorous Pierrot, therefore, was filled with indignation when he saw his adored princess on the point of passing into the giant's hands; with an impulse, of which he was not master, he drew his sword.

Pantafilando was so astounded, that he found not a

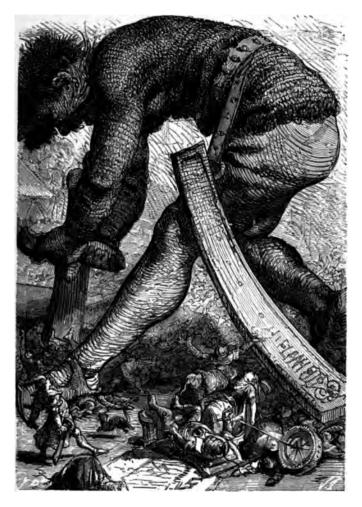
word to say. Then, in his rage, his blood mounted to his face with such force that he seemed likely to have an apoplexy; his forehead knit, and his terrible eyes flashed like lightning. All present trembled: Pierrot the indomitable alone was not shaken. The princess gave him a look in which recognition of his service, and fear lest he should fall in the unequal combat, strove for the mastery. This look raised Pierrot's soul to heaven.

"Take the kingdom of China, Thibet, and Mongolia," he cried; "take the kingdom of Nepaul, where the rocks are made of diamonds; take Lahore and Cashmere, which is the valley of paradise on earth; take the kingdom of the Grand Lama if you will, but take not my dear princess, or I will kill you like a pig!"

"And you," said Pantafilando, in a transport of rage, "if you don't take flight, I will take your ears."

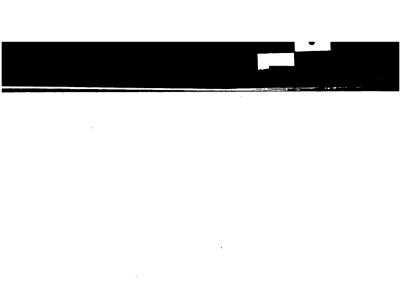
With these words, raising his sabre, he dealt a furious blow at Pierrot, but he avoided it by leaping aside. The sabre struck the table of the dining-hall, cut it in two, and went into the floor like a knife through a pat of butter; it went through to the cellar, cutting off the head of a wretched butler, who, profiting by the general disorder, was drinking his majesty's Shiraz wine, and stuck more than ten feet in the ground.

While the giant was trying to get his sword out, Pierrot seized a bronze goblet, chased by the celebrated Li-Ki, the greatest sculptor China ever had, and threw it at the giant's head with such swiftness, that if, instead of hitting



While the giant was trying to get his sword out, Pierrot seized a bronze goblet and threw it at his head.

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the giant on the head as it did, it had struck the wall it would have made a hole like a cannon ball from a 48-pounder. But Pantafilando's forehead was of metal far superior even to the diamond itself. He was scarcely stunned by the blow, and, without leaving off pulling at his sword, he picked up one of the three generals who had followed him, and who looked on at the combat in silence, and threw him at Pierrot. The wretched Tartar struck the wall, and his head was crushed like a bunch of ripe grapes under the vintagers' feet. At this the queen and princess, who alone remained in the hall after the flight of the court ladies, fainted with fright.

Pierrot himself felt affected. All the other spectators, still and pale, kept in the background along the wall, and measured with their eyes the distance between the window and the Yellow River, which ran at the foot of the palace. Unfortunately Pantafilando had closed the door before the fight began. Vantripan cried out as loud as he could.

"Well done, Signor Pantafilando! kill the wretch for me who has dared to raise his hand against my beloved son-in-law, against Heaven's anointed."

Prince Horribilis, not less terrified, loudly called on heaven to take vengeance on the rash, sacrilegious Pierrot, who dared attack his brother-in-law and sister's lover.

"Cowardly rascals," thought Pierrot, "if I die they will pitch me in the gutter, and if I conquer they will

receive the fruits of my victory. I have a great mind to leave them in the lurch, and make peace with Panta-filando; nothing would be easier; only then I must give up Bandoline."

All at once he saw that his fair princess had fainted. At the same time Pantafilando, opening the door, called to his Tartars to come to his help.

"I was a great fool to wait for them," said Pierrot, and, with a spring, he seized his beloved by the waist with one hand, with the other he opened the window, and leapt with Bandoline into the Yellow River.

His action was so quick and unexpected, that the giant had no time to prevent it. With impotent rage he saw Pierrot swim to the opposite bank, and there give thanks to heaven for saving his princess and himself from a terrible misfortune.

At Pantafilando's cry the hundred thousand Tartars started at once and came up into the palace. Their spurs were heard on the staircase.

"Great emperor," said the first who appeared on the threshold, "what do you wish; are we to plunder, or kill, or burn? we are ready."

"You have come too late, you fool!" cried the giant, at the same time giving him a box on the ears, which spun him round, and threw him on to the second, who fell on the third, the third on the fourth, and all, to the very last of those hundred thousand, fell one over the other like a house of cards—such was the force of that first blow.

When they had got up again,

"Take boats," said the giant, "cross the river, and run after Pierrot. Bring him to me, dead or alive; if you come without him I will behead you all."

These words gave courage to everybody. They jumped into the boats, crossed the stream, and hunted for Pierrot, but they could find no traces of him.



Pierrot and Bandoline had disappeared. The unhappy Tartars came back hanging their heads, like hounds who have missed the game. Pantafilando had all their right ears cut off and thrown into the streets to frighten the Chinese, and let them know the sort of master they had to deal with.

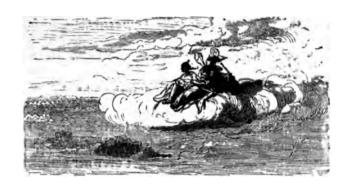
Vantripan and Horribilis were not the last to con-

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gratulate Pantafilando on this act of justice. The queen kept silence. She could not blame her daughter for trying to escape the giant; but, on the other hand, how could she excuse a young princess who had jumped into the water with the son of a miller?

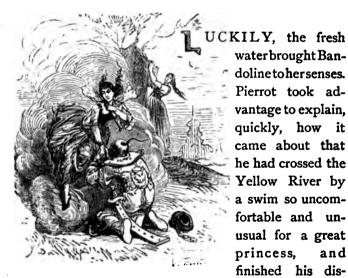
Meanwhile, what had become of Pierrot and the fair Bandoline? You will know, my friends, if you care to read the next chapter.





SECOND ADVENTURE

PIERROT RESTORES DYNASTIES.



water brought Bandoline to hersenses. Pierrot took advantage to explain, quickly, how it came about that he had crossed the Yellow River by a swim so uncomfortable and unusual for a great princess, and finished his dis-

course with a thousand protestations of devotion.

Bandoline hesitated to reply. She knew she ought either to laugh or to be angry. To laugh at the chagrin of the terrible Pantafilando, who thought he should marry her; or to be angry at Pierrot's audacity in daring. without asking her, to plunge her in the river. he had saved her, but he had shown a devotion too strong to be disinterested. She got over her embarrassment by saying, that though no doubt there were some details in the matter which were reprehensible, yet she could not on the whole but recognize the trouble Pierrot had taken for her: that she accepted his declaration of devotion, knowing it to be offered not to her only, but to the whole illustrious race of Vantripan: that neither her father, mother, or brother would ever forget the service he had rendered, and probably before many days they would be in a position to requite it worthily.

Pierrot gave no further explanation. He saw clearly that this was not a fit moment for doing it, and, moreover, on the opposite bank the Tartars were already assembling. He kissed the magic ring three times and invoked the fairy Aurora.

She at once appeared, and said,

"Friend Pierrot, you are getting into the habit of acting without consulting me, and then, when you find yourself in a fix, you call me to help you. This confidence is flattering but tiresome."

"Alas! good godmother," said Pierrot, throwing himself at her feet and kissing her hand, "are not you my refuge always? If you scorn me to whom shall I go? Are you not the most beautiful, the sweetest, and kindest of fairies?"

"He flatters me," said the fairy, "because he needs me. Well, what is it you want?"

This dialogue was spoken in a low voice, and Bandoline, taken up with drying her dress, and pulling out her crinoline, did not see the fairy, who was invisible to all save Pierrot, and did not hear a word she said. She only saw Pierrot speaking in a low tone on his knees, and thought he was praying.

"First of all," said Pierrot, "the princess and I must get to a place of safety, for there are ten thousand Tartars crossing the river in pursuit: and next, is there any way of getting this beautiful, persecuted princess a throne?"

"We shall see," said the fairy. "But my boy, now you are playing the knight-errant, don't count too much on the good graces of your lady. Remember, she will be twice ungrateful, as a woman and as a queen, for none are so forgetful and ungrateful as kings and women; and don't come afterwards and weep out your love-troubles to me."

"Never fear, adorable godmother," said Pierrot; "I require no reward for my services, so I cannot think her ungrateful."

"Well, well, that is your look-out. But don't you trust that little woman."

With these words, just as the Tartars reached the bank, she took up Pierrot and Bandoline in a cloud, and put them down a hundred and fifty leagues from thence in a small wood, near which Vantripan's army was encamped.

This army consisted of five hundred thousand Chinese who received for pay a ration of rice every morning and leave to go and drink in the Yellow River, which ran Each soldier naturally took with him to near them. the service courage and patriotic zeal in proportion to his ration of rice. That is, whenever a Tartar appeared on the left, he disappeared on the right. An accident, said the Chinese, so often happens; when two men of war have arms in their hands, and they are enemies, and there is no one by to separate them, it is much better for them to separate of their own accord than to run the risk of cutting their throats, when perhaps they are fathers of families, or likely to become so. the reason why, at the first sound of Pantafilando's entry into China, the commander-in-chief gave the first order and first example of retreat, and they pitched their camp more than two hundred leagues away from the route the Tartars would have to take.

Pierrot and the princess, when they were put down on the ground again, lost no time in going to the commander-in-chief's tent. This gallant warrior, by name Barakhan, was Vantripan's nephew, and he had more than once cast envious eyes on his cousin, and on the crown his uncle wore. For this reason, Vantripan, with his usual perception, put him at the head of the army, to get rid of him from the court.

As soon as the princess had told her misfortunes, and described the exploits of Pierrot to her cousin, he clapped his hands, and a slave appeared.

"Call the generals to council, and order the whole army to get under arms!"

In the meantime he assumed royal robes, and when all the principal officers were assembled, to Pierrot's disgust, he took his cousin's hand and said,

"Friends, Vantripan is dethroned; Horribilis isn't much better; they are both prisoners of cruel Pantafilando's. I am, therefore, lawful heir to the throne, and I am about to marry my cousin, whom you see here, Princess Bandoline, Queen of Beauty. If any one of you opposes me in this, I shall have him impaled."

"Long live King Barakhan the First!" cried all present with one voice.

Princess Bandoline turned her eyes on Pierrot, looking so beautiful and languishing, that he could not resist it.

"Down with Barakhan, the usurper," he cried, courageously. "May Vantripan, our lawful king, live for ever!"

"Seize that man, and impale him!" said Barakhan.

Pierrot drew his scimitar and whirled it round in the air: three of the mandarins' heads rolled off like ripe

Pierrot restores Dynasties.

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apples at the usurper's feet; all turned and fled; Barakhan himself ran out of the tent calling for his guards.

In a few minutes, Pierrot was surrounded by six thousand men; none dared come near him, but they hurled stones and darts at him like hail.

"Where can I hide myself?" thought our hero; and



he rushed into the thick of the crowd; but if his action was quick, his assailants were still quicker in avoiding him. He found himself in a fresh circle as thick as the first, equally easy to disperse, and equally quick in reforming itself when he had dispersed it. Fortunately, a good idea came into his head; he saw Barakhan mounted, and hidden behind his guards, urging them on to throw at him. Suddenly, with a bound, he seized a man in each

hand, one from the right, the other from the left, and without doing his prisoners any harm, he put the one

in front of him, and the other behind him, to shelter him from the darts they were throwing. The guards at once stopped harassing him lest they should hurt their comrades. Pierrot took advantage of this cessation of hostilities, and releasing the prisoner whom he held in front of him, he swung his sword round his head with a steady, regular, and irresistible force, like a man mowing grass with a scythe, and in a minute he had knocked off fifteen or twenty of the nearest heads. A fresh retreat took place, and such a sudden one that Pierrot found himself face to face with Barakhan. The latter tried to fly, but the crowd was too thick. He



pushed his horse on to Pierrot, but our friend avoided it, and seizing the bridle with one hand, and Barakhan by the leg with the other, he lifted him from the saddle, whirled him round and round like a sling, and hurled

Pierrot restores Dynasties.

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him away with such force, that the unhappy prince went up in the air higher than the clouds. As he came down he saw to the right the snowy peaks of Dawalagiri, reflecting the rays of the sun, and to the left the Koenlun mountains overlooking the great Manchuri, hitherto unvisited by travellers; but he had no time to inform the



Academy of his discoveries because in a few minutes he was dashed into a thousand pieces.

At this sight, a unanimous cry rose from the assembly.

"Long live Vantripan, our king! Long live Pierrot, our general! Long live Princess Bandoline!" And they all ran to kiss the skirt of Pierrot's robe.

"What's this?" he cried, "just now you were ready to impale me, and now you do homage to me! Were you lying then, or are you lying to me now?"

"We never tell lies, sir captain. We always obey the strongest. Hitherto we believed Barakhan to be

the strongest, and we obeyed him; now we see that you are, and we obey you. Curse the usurper, Barakhan, who deceived us!"

"If ever I'm king," thought Pierrot, "I shall remember the lesson. But let us hasten to comfort the princess. She ought to be trembling for my life."

Bandoline, however, was not. She detested Barakhan; and had asked Pierrot's aid to



deliver her from him, but she considered Pierrot's life belonged to her by divine right, like everything else in this world. Pierrot, blinded by his love and ambition, did not understand this.

She received him with cold dignity, would scarcely let him sit down, and ordered him at once to set the army in array, retake the Chinese capital, and dethrone Pantafilando. Pierrot obeyed with a sigh; but at the first order he gave to march against the enemy, the whole army turned their backs.

"Cowardly rascals," cried Pierrot, and taking advantage of one of the generals who had his back towards him, he gave him such a kick that it sent him up as high as the palace roof. Fortunately the poor man fell on his feet, and respectfully took off his hat, which was ornamented with bells to frighten the enemy with.

"Sir," he said to Pierrot, "we love you, respect you, and fear you most of all, but in heaven's name don't ask us to do what we cannot do. God has not given us courage: would you have us fight in spite of ourselves?"

"You ugly Chinese frights!" said Pierrot.

"Well, sire, we are ugly: but though there are many handsome heads, as your own, for example, is particularly handsome, and full of intelligence and courage, yet sire, I make bold to say, I still prefer my own; it suits my neck and shoulders better."

"Botheration!" said Pierrot, "what's to be done?"

"Shall we go?" said the fair Bandoline, coming out of the tent where she had been perfuming, dressing, combing, and pomading herself all the while Pierrot had been attacking and haranguing the Chinese.

"By St. James of Campostello," thought Pierrot, "I confess I'm a fool: I have nearly had my head broken twice to-day for this wonderful princess, without her so much as thanking me."

This reflection, sad as it was sensible, did not prevent him throwing himself before the princess and being ready to sacrifice his life for her. It is the characteristic of love that it is self-sufficing, and is devoted without hope of reward.

But we must confess all. At the bottom of Pierrot's love there was a little hope and a great deal of vanity. "I will do such great actions," he thought, "and gain so much glory that she will end by loving me. It is not for you, Pierrot, at your age, still unknown, and only a month ago a peasant, to become to-day the sole support of so great and beautiful a princess. Fortune will give me that distinction."

"Princess," he said to Bandoline, "we must go alone. The army is frightened at Pantafilando, and refuses to follow us."

"And you allow it?" she asked.

In this remark, and the look she gave Pierrot, there was so much recognition of his courage, and reproval at the same time, that he was ready to turn back and massacre the five hundred thousand Chinese to force them to march against the enemy; but reflecting a little made him wise, and he contented himself by saying—

"Adorable princess, full moon of full moons, for your sake I would swim across the seas and defy the world; but I cannot make people walk when they will sit still. King Solomon says, you cannot make an ass drink if he isn't thirsty."

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"Pierrot," said the fair Bandoline, "you always offer me what I don't ask you for. What's the use of your swimming across the sea? there is no sea between this and my father's capital, and if there were I should find it more comfortable to go in a good ship, manned by skilful sailors. What I do want is that you bring this army to succour my father Vantripan."



"Very well," said Pierrot discouraged, "speak to them yourself."

The fair Bandoline made a magnificent speech: she reminded them of the exploits of their ancestors; she spoke of the danger to their country, their wives, their little ones, and extolled the glory of re-establishing the legitimate monarchy.

But the Chinese turned a deaf ear.

"Let us go alone," said Bandoline indignantly; and thanks to their horses, which were swifter than the wind, she and Pierrot arrived ten days after at the

Chinese capital, which they entered by night, going to an inn to gain information.

Pantafilando had lost no time after Pierrot's departure. Among other wise decrees, he had ordered all Chinese to get up at six in the morning and go to bed at eight in the evening; and that they should shorten by a head all those who were more than five feet five in height. Everybody applauded these orders except, as we can well understand, those Chinese



who were five feet six inches, and they remained hidden in their cellars from fear of the executioner.

Pierrot learnt that a price had been set on his head, but the news did not trouble him much; he determined to defend his head vigorously. That very evening he went out after dark and stuck up the following notice on the palace wall:

"In the name of his eternal and invincible majesty, Vantripan IV., legitimate king of China, Thibet, Mongolia, the peninsula of Corea, and of all the Chinese, crooked or straight, black or yellow, white or tawny, whom it has pleased heaven to place between the Karkounoor and Himalaya mountains, Pierrot, commander-in-chief to his majesty, challenges the giant Pantafilando, emperor of the Unknown Isles, self-styled king of China, to mortal combat."

An ancient law compelled pretenders to the Chinese throne to decide their quarrels in single combat, thus avoiding unnecessary slaughter. Pierrot knew well enough that Pantafilando, proud of his strength and courage, would accept the challenge.

The next morning Pantafilando saw the notice, which was written in gigantic characters, and announced by herald through the town, that Pierrot might present himself without fear in the arena, and that the combat should take place at three o'clock in the afternoon. If the giant fell, all the Tartars should leave China; if he conquered, Bandoline should be the prize of victory.

The fair princess thought this condition rather hard; but recalling Pierrot's courage and dexterity, and seeing very clearly that after his death she would be handed over defenceless to the first comer, she agreed, and sat on a magnificent chair a few paces from the scene of action.

Pierrot was ready after he had said his prayers to heaven, and invoked the fairy Aurora. She shook her head with an ill-omened air, and said:

"My friend, there is still time; won't you go back to your father's hut and leave your princess alone? I know her: she will soon console herself, and you will soon restore your parents' happiness and your own. Trust me, and give up the combat: I foresee it will be a source of cruel grief to you."

"If it costs me my life, I will defend my princess," the heroic Pierrot replied.

"Go then," said the fairy, "and enter the ring, for Pantafilando is waiting for you."

The giant now was challenging Pierrot; they were both armed, the giant with his great scimitar, and a lance a hundred feet long; Pierrot with his sword only, counting more on his dexterity than on his strength.

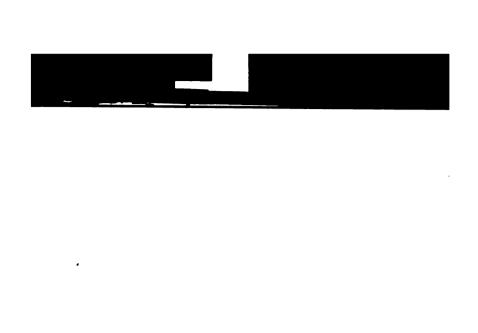
At the first blow Pantafilando thrust his lance at Pierrot roughly, and just missed spitting him like a lark. The lance-head caught Pierrot's short mantle (they were the fashion then), and tore it from top to bottom. Pierrot unhooked his mantle, and appeared only in his doublet. He then took a spring, and with an impetuous bound, struck head first against the giant's chest, like a catapult. The latter, stunned by the blow, staggered a minute, and then doubled up and fell backwards. Pierrot ran to him at once to put his foot on his throat, but Pantafilando, in his efforts to get up, kicked him so



violently that our hero was upset and thrown twenty paces off.

Hitherto the combat seemed equal, but Pierrot, though thrown once, had lost none of his strength, while the giant, shaken by the tremendous blow he had had in his chest, could only keep up with difficulty, like a strong wall half destroyed by cannon shot.

"Give me something to drink," said the giant, and when a cask full of wine was brought to



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with a back stroke he cut Pantaniando's head on.

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him, he emptied it at one draught. Then, like a loyal adversary, he had wine offered to Pierrot, who drank, thanked him, and cried—

" Look out!"

Pantafilando seized one of the gates of the arena where the combat took place, and threw it at Pierrot. The latter, taking another gate, parried the blow, and threw his gate next, and hit the giant on the thigh. He was knocked over by the blow, and, raising himself on one knee, vainly tried to continue the fight. With a sword-cut, he lopped off one of Pierrot's ears; but Pierrot again guarded himself with his own sword, for if he had not, the giant's sword, following its course downwards, must have split him in two; and then, with a back stroke, he cut Pantafilando's head off.

A loud cry of joy rose on all sides. Everyone cried out—

"Glory and long life to the brave Pierrot!"

And the fair Bandoline, touched with so much love and courage, got up to meet the conqueror, but when she was about three paces from him, she suddenly cried with disgust:

"Take that horrible object away!"

Poor Pierrot, who thought he was at the height of happiness, saw himself rejected with despair.

He had forgotten his ear, which was partly cut off by Pantafilando's sword. It was this unfortunate ear, injured in her service, that had made the princess utter

Pierrot restores Dynasties.

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the cry of horror; and we must confess that a lover who has only one ear should attend to himself, and not appear before ladies.

However that may be, no sooner had Bandoline said "Take that horrible object away," than Pierrot, who thought himself the idol of the people, found he was



abandoned directly. The Tartars fled at the death of their chief: the Chinese ran to the palace, proclaimed Vantripan king over again, and swore fidelity to him; and Pierrot, covered with blood, went to have his wound dressed by a surgeon.

"Death and confusion," cried Vantripan, sitting down to table; "my determined face impressed the enemy greatly."

"Sire," said the minister of war, with his mouth full, "you showed a truly royal spirit, and Cæsar himself was but a coward compared with you."

"I'm glad to see," said the king, "that you tell me the truth without flattery. For your trouble I will give you a pension of a hundred thousand pounds from my privy purse. Give me some eel-pie."

"Sire," said the minister, "I thank you, and declare my devotion—"

"All right, all right. Give me some pie, bother you! Your devotion worries me, and your expressions make me sleepy. By the by," he added suddenly, "where were you during the reign of Pantafilando?"

"Sire, I was, like your majesty, impressing the Tartars with my countenance."

"What's that? You impressed them, you say, as his Majesty? Do you dare compare yourself to me, you scoundrel?"

"Sire!"

"To me, you rascal?"

"Sire!"

"To me, you wretched liar? To me, you harlequin? To me, you clown? To me?"

"Sire!"

"Guards, seize him and impale him. This—this," added Vantripan, "is how I punish a traitor. Horribilis!"

"Father."

"Go and fetch Pierrot."

"Father, you don't consider! Am I, heir presumptive to the crown, to go and fetch a mere officer of the guards?"

"Heir presumptive, go and fetch Pierrot, or I'll throw my plate at your head."

"I am going, father," said Horribilis. And he added to himself, "You rascal Pierrot, I owe you one for this humiliation."

Pierrot soon appeared. His wound had been dressed, and certainly the plaisters which covered it did not improve him.

"Is it you, then," said Vantripan, "who killed Pantafilando?"

"Yes, sire," said Pierrot modestly.

"Why did you do so without my orders? I meant to have cropped the bandit's ears with my own hand."

"Sire, I was not aware of it," said Pierrot, laughing when he remembered Vantripan's behaviour the day Pantafilando arrived.

"I forgive you this time. For the future, don't be so zealous."

"You shall be obeyed, sire."

"That is not all, Pierrot. In spite of your recklessness I wish more than ever to attach you to my person. I appoint you grand constable."

"Sire!"

"Grand admiral."

- "Sire!"
- "Grand cupbearer."
- "Sire!"
- "And grand—whatever you like. You must not leave me any more: you must breakfast, dine, and sup with me, and to send me to sleep you shall tell me stories."
- "Sire, so many favours will make many envy me," said Pierrot.
 - "All the better. I want them to be mad with envy."
- "And I fear I shall discharge all these duties very badly at first."
- "What does that matter to you, if I find you do all in order? Do you think your predecessors discharged them better?"
- "Sire," said Pierrot, driven into a corner, "when shall I find time to sleep?"
- "Sleep! Didn't you understand me? It is that I may sleep, that you must watch. It is a faithful subject's duty to keep guard over his sovereign, not to sleep!"
- "I should have done better," thought Pierrot, "to follow the fairy's advice and go home."

All these honours did not turn Pierrot's head. He would gladly have renounced the appointments as admiral and constable for one smile from the disdainful Bandoline, but he could not get one. The first time he presented himself at court he wanted to kiss her hand,

but she turned her back with scorn, and with such an offended air that the poor constable was quite disconcerted.



"Alas," he would say, "what has become of the time when I had both my ears, when Pantafilando reigned here and my ungrateful princess rode alone with me, only too glad then that I was ready to follow her and defend her?"

These reflections had such an effect on poor Pierrot that he grew pale, lean, and debilitated, and was soon no more than the shadow of his former self.

The fairy Aurora perceived this. She was, as we have said, the most charitable person that ever lived in earth or heaven. She only gave counsel when she was asked, and always before the event happened. "When once the evil is done," she would say, "you must rectify it, and above everything you

must not cast in the unlucky man's teeth that remark pedants always make, 'I told you how it would be!'"

- "Pierrot," she said, "you want change—you must travel."
- "My dear godmother," said poor Pierrot, in a sad tone, "how can I leave my duties, and the public business King Vantripan has committed to my care?"
- "Pierrot," said the fairy, "you are not candid. You don't much care about your duties, and as for public affairs, believe me they never prosper better than when no one attends to them. I know what keeps you here; you love Bandoline, and she scorns you."
- "Alas, yes," cried the unhappy Pierrot, "she scorns me because I have only one ear. The perfidious one forgets that I lost it in her service."
- "My friend Pierrot," said the wise fairy, "would you still love her if she had only half a nose, and had lost the other half by an accident?"
- "That's not possible," Pierrot replied, "she has the prettiest nose in the world, after yours, dear godmother. It is a nose whose aquiline curve—"
- "I didn't ask for a description," said the fairy. "Once more, would you love her if she had lost half of her charming nose?"
 - "I—think—so," said Pierrot, hesitating.
- "You think so? aren't you sure? Well, I am quite sure of the contrary. You could not bear to look at her: and why should she be more philosophical than you, and take seeing you with one ear more coolly? Men boast of being stronger, braver, more sensible, more

reasonable than women, and in practice they expect a thousand times more strength, firmness, sense, and reason from the weaker sex."

"How can she forget the service I rendered her," said Pierrot, "and the danger I incurred for her?"

"That's another affair," said the fairy. "But love does not depend on recollection, but comes and goes no one knows how."

"I'm too ignorant to argue on the subject," said Pierrot; "all I know is that I love her and she scorns me."

"Pierrot, I shall leave you," said the fairy; "you are not in the humour to listen to reason, or to discuss metaphysics. Adieu, when you want me you know you can count on your godmother."

The next day, Pierrot was secretly called to see Prince Horribilis. He went at once, quite surprised at such a favour, for it was not usual with the prince.

Horribilis received him in such a way that Pierrot thought he must have mistaken his character. "I calumniated him," he said to himself, "when I thought him wicked and stupid. It is those scoundrel courtiers who put down all sorts of vice to him. He is not brave, I admit, and that is very unfortunate for a prince; but others undertake to be brave for him, and who knows? perhaps, in spite of his poltroonery, he may be a great prince and a successful warrior."

After exchanging the ordinary compliments, Horribilis said to him:

"My dear Pierrot, you must have noticed that I have always been your friend, and that I am anxious to promote your success."

"Hum! hum!" thought Pierrot, "if we are friends, it is

very recently;" then he added aloud, "Sire, how can I requite so great a kindness on your part?"

"By listening to me," interrupted the prince. "You are not rich, are you, my friend?"

"Is he going to give me alms?" said Pierrot aside, his pride beginning to make him indignant. Then aloud, he said, "Sire, your father's kindnesses have exceeded all my hopes."

"I know,-I know.



But between ourselves, if my father's caprice (and my respected father, the great Vantripan, is very capricious) were to deprive you of all your dignities to-day, you would be as poor as the day you came to court."

"Sire," said Pierrot, "my honour would remain, and with that no man is ever poor. I was not born a subject of your father's, and I could offer my services to another king, who would appreciate them better."

"That's just what I want to avoid," cried Horribilis. "Pierrot, the saviour of China, and conqueror of the invincible Pantafilando, the prop of the Vantripan dynasty, would go off alone without help, like the late Belisarius, from port to port, and country to country, to offer his courage to one of our enemies. China would dishonour herself by such ingratitude. No, Pierrot, I cannot permit it." And, rising with enthusiasm, he embraced the constable in his arms.

- "But how is it to be avoided?" said Pierrot.
- "Ah, that's it! I, I am rich, and I am your friend. Between friends all is in common. I can always shelter you from my father's caprices. You know my country of Li-chi-ki-ri-bi-ni?"
- "Your country of Lirichiki?" said Pierrot, who was not accustomed to Chinese names.
- "Li-chi-ki-ri-bi-ni," replied Horribilis. "It is twenty leagues round, and is all closed in by very high walls, within which thousands of tigers, lions, boars, stags, and roebucks abound. It is the best part of all China. I'll give it to you!"
- "You'll give it to me?" cried Pierrot, wild with joy at the thought of the good hunting he could get there. "It is impossible, sire, and your generosity——"

"Why speak of generosity? don't I owe you everything? and can I ever repay you, who have saved my race and my throne?"

"That is," said Pierrot, "the throne of your august father, which will one day belong to you."

"We don't understand one another, it appears, friend Pierrot."

"I don't trust him," thought the great constable, cooling suddenly.

"I will continue you in all the offices my father has given you: I will add to the gift of my land of Li-chi-ki-ri-bi-ni, and I will make you my right-hand man and prime minister; but on one condition: it is that you will give me your help to make me king and dethrone Vantripan."

"Dethrone Vantripan! my benefactor?" cried Pierrot.

"He wants more pay," thought Horribilis. "The ambition of people in a small way is astonishing. Listen," he added, "is the gift of my country too small, and would you like me to add to it the kingdom of Thibet, and my sister Bandoline's hand?"

This last offer made Pierrot's heart beat. King of Thibet! The fair Bandoline! What a temptation for the son of a miller, the love-sick Pierrot. But he did not hesitate.

"Monsignor," he said, "you do not know me. I accept, as I ought to do, the honour you have placed on me: and certainly, if by throwing myself in the flames

I could obtain your sister at your hand, I would do it at once: but if it is a matter of treason——"

"Treason," cried Horribilis, "what do you take me for, grand constable? Am I a traitor? I?"

"Monsignor," said Pierrot, "no doubt I misunderstood you. Allow me to retire."

"No! by heaven! you shan't go, and take my secret with you. Stop, Pierrot, and fight with me, or you are a dead man! I can't let you denounce me to my father."

"Sire," said Pierrot firmly, "certain actions suit certain people. As for me, I am not one either to betray or to denounce;" and he made a step towards the door.

"Pierrot," screamed Horribilis, mad with passion, "you shall follow me or die."

"Monsignor," said Pierrot, "I shall neither follow you nor die;" and, drawing his sword, he walked to the door. At the same minute Horribilis clapped his hands three times, and the captain of the guard appeared.

"Arrest that scoundrel," cried Horribilis.

"By Mahomet!" said Pierrot, "this is a joke!"

And he walked to the captain of the prince's guard: the latter, however, did not lose time by waiting for him; but retreated so sharply to the door that he upset the lieutenant who followed him, and the sub-lieutenant who followed the lieutenant. The guards, when they saw him, without waiting for the prince, or their officers, fled on all sides, and the invincible Pierrot passed through, throwing scornful glances at them.

When he entered his own house, he threw himself into a chair, exclaiming, "This then is the most illustrious court in the world: the king is a glutton, his wife a blockhead, his son a viper, and his daughter a——No, I won't



blaspheme; but good heavens! what is the use of riches and power?"

"To make those wise who know how to do without them, friend Pierrot," said the fairy Aurora, who suddenly appeared beside him. "Ah! is that you, dear godmother?" said Pierrot, "you have just come at the right time; I'm very unhappy—I suffer acutely."

"What's the matter, toothache or heartache?"

"Nothing, if you like, godmother: you prophesied quite right when I went to fight Pantafilando, that it would bring me trouble. Alas! alas! my unhappy ear; that cruel Pantafilando!"

"Why, he only cut off one ear; and do you call him cruel? What would he have been if he had cut off your head?"

" I could have consoled myself easier," said the melancholy Pierrot.

"Or, at least, you could have held your tongue. Let me see this ear so unfortunately cut; well, certainly, my friend, it does hang in a very nasty way, and would have an unpleasant aspect at a ball. Do you suffer so very much, Pierrot?"

"Oh yes, godmother; my heart is very bad."

"That's nothing, friend; eat this piece of sugar, and that will go off."

As she said this she added two magic words and touched his ear with her wand.

"Stop," said Pierrot, suddenly, "my ear is better, it's put on again—I am cured!" And he began rushing about the room. When he had gone round twelve or fifteen times, jumping over the chairs and upsetting the tables, he threw himself at Aurora's feet, and kissed her

hand so tenderly and gratefully that she was quite touched.

Suddenly Pierrot rang the bell, and a negro appeared.

"Fetch me my lace shirt with the frill, my best cravat, and full court dress."

The fairy smiled, and said, "Where are you going, Pierrot?"

He blushed.

"You need not tell me," the fairy replied, "I can read where in your eyes. They will scorn you, Pierrot."

"Let them," said Pierrot; "if any man laughs in my face I will give him a kick, and send him to the moon to see if I'm there."

"And if a woman does? if it were the fair princess, what then?"

Pierrot scratched his head.

"Go, friend," said the good fairy, "I won't damp the pleasure you are looking forward to: go where your destiny calls you, and I will wait here for you."

Pierrot, clothed in silk, velvet, and gold, made his entry with great pomp at the palace. He was mounted on a magnificent black horse, cousin german to the celebrated Rubicon, which the lady warrior Bradamante rode. This horse was so nimble that he cleared mountain summits with a bound, and ran in the air as if he had wings, and was supported by the clouds. We know that we all could walk on the clouds if we did not bear too heavy or too long on such uncertain soil; but this is just the diffi-

culty, for you must not stop in the same place more than the millionth part of a second, and heavy, thick, and slow as we are, none of us have been able to to it.

Rubicon's cousin-german was named Fendlair; all the court admired him and coveted him: but Pierrot alone. by the fairy Aurora's permission, for she had given it to him, could ride it. One day Prince Horribilis wanted to try him in Pierrot's absence, and was sent by one kick to the first floor of the palace, where, fortunately for him, the window was open, and he fell on the carpet, which deadened his fall. When he got up he ordered the horse to be killed; but as the guards were going to carry out the order, Fendlair, guessing their intention, walked with such an air towards the nearest of them, that, in a fright, he shot his arrow at random. The arrow, badly aimed, by a sad accident hit the open mouth of the minister of justice, who was yawning. The shaft of the arrow got broken as the poor man was trying to pull it out, and the iron head got fixed between his two jaws, so that he could not shut his mouth. They heard inarticulate cries of rage coming from his throat, which mingled with the shouts of laughter from Vantripan and all his courtiers.

The laughter did not last long. By kicking, first on one side and then on the other, Fendlair had put all the royal guard to flight, and now came face to face, or rather nose to nose, with his enemy the Prince Horribilis. The latter tried to escape; but Fendlair seized him with his teeth by the waist, and carried him round the great court of the palace a dozen times.

- "Save my son!" cried the queen.
- "Help!" howled Horribilis.
- "Guards!" shouted Vantripan.
- "Guards?" said Pierrot, appearing suddenly; "ah, sire, the guard is far off if they kept up that pace; they must have been going five leagues an hour."



"In heaven's name, Pierrot, save my son!"

"It's an awkward affair," said Pierrot, and he turned to seize Fendlair by the bridle; but the horse, seeing his master was going to take away his prey, let go of his own accord, grinding his teeth, and munching a piece of Horribilis' back.

"Justice, father," cried the poor prince, "justice!"

"On whom?"

"On Pierrot, father, and on his maddened horse, whose marks I shall always carry—look here!"

With these words, turning his back to the company, he showed the lower end of his back and the wound, which was more amusing than pitiful.



Vantripan got in a great rage. "Swords and pistols! Pierrot," he cried, "you abuse my patience."

- "Swords and pistols," cried Pierrot back, boldly, and more loudly than the king, "why should you be angry and cry out like a goose on a spit?"
 - "Pierrot, you are insolent."
 - "Your majesty, you are stupid!"
- "Pierrot, I'll have you quartered, and given to my dogs."

"Your majesty, don't irritate me; my nerves are excited, and I'll blow you and all your Chinese up!"

"Come," said Vantripan frightened; "be reasonable, friend Pierrot. What have you got to complain of? I will have it set right at once."

"I'll do that myself if I want it done," said Pierrot, proudly.

"Pierrot, my dear Pierrot, I beg you be calm."

"How can I be calm, your majesty, when I see how that meddler, your great fool of a son, has irritated my good steed?"

"You are right," said Vantripan. "Horribilis, why did you touch the horse?"

"Father," said Horribilis, "it was the horse that pitched me into the first-floor window of your palace."

"You detract from my horse, who is too good for you, Because when he's attacked he turns round on you,"

sang Pierrot between his teeth. "Why did the prince try to ride the horse in spite of my express order?"

"That's true," said Vantripan; "why did you go against Pierrot's order?"

"My father," said Horribilis sadly, "what words are you using—you, the king of China!"

"Of Thibet, Mongolia, the peninsula of Corea, and of all the Chinese, crooked or straight, black or yellow, white or tawny, whom it has pleased heaven to place between the Koukounoor and Himalaya mountains," continued Pierrot, in the shrill and monotonous voice of a herald who orders silence, or of a town-crier who reads the mayor's proclamation.

"Horribilis," said the king, "go, and have your wound dressed; I will have justice done, be sure."

Horribilis went out, and Vantripan said to Pierrot, "Don't owe him a grudge. He don't mean any harm. He is a little thoughtless, but has a good heart at bottom. I'll go bail for him to you."

"At your request, your majesty, I forgive him," said Pierrot, "but don't let him come back."

"I'll see after that," said Vantripan, happy in having appeased the constable. "And now, friends, let us sit down to our meal."

This scene took place a few days before Horribilis' proposition to Pierrot to dethrone Vantripan: so it is easy to understand why Pierrot distrusted this pretender to the throne. We can also understand our hero's pride when he rode to the palace on Fendlair. Twenty pages went before him, and like Marlborough's funeral procession, one carried the great scimitar, another his shield, another nothing.

Pierrot dismounted in the court, and went slowly upstairs, his head erect and eye steady like a true son of Jupiter. It was dinner-time: he walked into the dining-hall without being announced; on this, the great Vantripan filled his gold goblet with Chio wine of vintage of the comet year, and lifting it above his head, cried—

- "The immortal gods be thanked! who give me Chio wine to drink, and such a friend to love. Drink to my health, Pierrot! Are you hungry?"
 - " No, your majesty."
 - "Thirsty?"
 - "No, your majesty?"
- "By Brahma! what are you looking so solemn about?"
 - "I wish to speak to you on business, your majesty."

Horribilis, who was sitting at the table opposite Pierrot, grew pale: he thought Pierrot had come to denounce him, and got up to fly.

"Remain seated, prince," said Pierrot, gravely, "there will be nothing about you in our conversation."

Horribilis breathed again. He trusted Pierrot's word. When the king had emptied his six bottles, he left the table with a bright eye and gay air.

- "How smart you look," he said. "You are ready for hunting. Are you going to a wedding?"
 - "Yes; to my own, your majesty," said Pierrot.
- "And whom are you going to marry, if I may be allowed to ask?"
- "Your majesty, there is nothing to allow," said Pierrot.

 "If you had not spoken first, I should have told you. I have the honour of asking in marriage the hand of your daughter, Princess Bandoline."
- "Ah, ha!" said Vantripan, "that's it, is it? Well, I will give her to you, my friend, and good luck to you.

By Mahomet, I'll dance at your wedding, and we will dine for the next eight days without leaving the table."

"Sire," said the queen, "you don't consider; do you even know if the person you wish to take as your son-in-law is a prince, or the son of a prince?"

"He may have what he likes for a father," said Vantripan. "I don't care. Has Bandoline got to marry his father?"

"And what if your daughter refuses him?" said the queen, who did not like Pierrot, and would have been glad of an excuse so legitimate.

"If my daughter does not like it, my daughter is a fool," said Vantripan.

"Your majesty," said Pierrot humbly, "I beg leave to ask the princess."

Bandoline was present, and for the first time in her life she was silent. Really, the matter required thought.

"Sire," she said at last, "all my father's wishes are sacred laws to me, but——"

"There!" said Vantripan, "there's that everlasting but, that these capricious women always use.

'Marion weeps, Marion cries, Marion wants a husband,'

and when the husband comes, Marion won't have him. He is either too young, or too old, or too handsome, or too ugly, or too wise, or too wild, or too avaricious, or too poor. One never knows what passes in these girls' heads—the irregulated machines. Come, now, tell us plainly what fault you have to find with Pierrot. Isn't he brave, young, full of spirit? hasn't he saved your life and honour, and my throne? what more do you want?"



"Sire," said Bandoline, "that's all true; but he has only got one ear."

"Well, didn't he lose the other in your service?" said Vantripan.

"I well know he did; but that doesn't alter the fact that he has only one ear left, and an ear not paired is not nice to look at."

"Your most serene highness," said Pierrot modestly,

"I foresaw that objection, and I have replaced my ear in its proper place; be kind enough to convince yourself. Pull it, don't fear, it is well secured. Well: now, your highness, be kind enough to pull the other."

The princess pulled so hard, that Pierrot cried out.

"It is very remarkable," she said; "he is right, he has two live ears; but I don't understand how such a serious wound could be cured so quickly. There must be magic in it somewhere, and I should not like to marry a magician."

"Tut, tut, that's another story," cried Vantripan, who feared Pierrot would get angry; but he was mistaken. Pierrot, who had been kneeling to the princess, got up with great coolness, and said to her:

"Your serene highness, you shan't have the unhappiness of marrying a magician; but I predict, without being a great prophet, that you will marry a curly dog. Sire," he added, turning to Vantripan, "grant me leave of absence for some time. It is fitting that a man whom you honour with your confidence should take a tour round the frontiers of the empire, and see after the proper administration of the state, and prevent the Tartar invasion under Kabardantes, younger brother of Pantafilando."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Vantripan, "are they near us?"

"Sire," replied Pierrot, "fear nothing; I myself will go and meet them."

"For heaven's sake, Pierrot, don't be rough with them; they have a bad character. Give them gold, silver, slaves, flocks, silks, anything you like, only prevent them coming at all risks."

"It shall not trouble you the least, your majesty," said Pierrot.



- "Well then, go, and don't come back till you have killed the last of them."
- "Pleasant journey," said Horribilis, when Pierrot was gone.
 - "A good riddance," said the queen.
- "You are fools," said Vantripan; "you are always getting me into some scrape that upsets my digestion.

Pierrot has gone away very dissatisfied; I saw it plain enough, though he tried to hide it."

"Well, what does Pierrot's dissatisfaction matter to us?" said the queen scornfully.

"You don't know what you are talking about," said poor Vantripan. "Hold your tongue, you jade!"

- "But, father-"
- "Daughter, you are a disagreeable girl."
- "My mother is right," said Horribilis, "and-"
- "As for you, my dear Horribilis, you hold your tongue, unless you want your neck wrung like a fowl's. Now, children, let's go to supper."

The whole court followed. Meanwhile Pierrot went home, dismissed his attendants, and went off on horse-back with the fairy Aurora. If my readers will follow me still further, I will tell them in the next chapter where he went, and what his object was in going.





THIRD ADVENTURE.

How Pierrot reforms Abuses, and undertakes to dig Gardens.



HE fairy Aurora was ready to accompany Pierrot on his journey. He was even more delighted than formerly to have such company; and quite forgot his misfortunes. He laughed, sang, galloped, admired the crops, the foliage of the trees, and even the caterpillars that ate them.

"By heaven," he cried suddenly, in a transport of enthusiasm, "how beautiful and wonderful all nature is! Oh, godmother, I do thank you that you have got me far away from that court, that fat Vantripan, his fool of a wife, and still greater fool of a daughter, and his blackguard of a son."

"Oh! oh!" said the fairy, "it has come to that, has it, Pierrot? How sad! 'His fool of a wife, and still greater fool of a daughter.' What words for a courtier, and for a lover!"

"Lover!" said Pierrot; "I'm no longer that, thank heaven: courtier I never was. I'm not the man to wait in an antichamber till the king comes out and condescends to look at me; or to wait under that minx's window till she is kind enough to notice me, as she looks to the ground."

- "You are cured then, Pierrot, eh?"
- "Completely, godmother: nothing but habit or politeness held me to her; like a bird tied by a string. Her scorn this morning cut the string, and I am free!"
- "Well, Pierrot, since you are in such a happy state of mind, would you like me to tell you why you have not succeeded?"
 - "I don't wish to know, godmother."
- "But I wish to tell you. You have not succeeded because you were ungrateful."
- "I ungrateful? to you, godmother? Oh, you don't do me justice."
 - "Not to me, but towards some other people. Think."
- "To the king? True he loaded me with honours, but I served him well, didn't I?"

- "It's not that, Pierrot. What was your salary?"
- "Nearly two millions a year, godmother."
- "A nice little sum. And how long have you been in office?"
 - "About six months."
 - "That is, you have received a million?"
 - "Yes, godmother."
- "Out of that sum, how much have you sent to your parents, who are poor, and as you know, live by their labour. Tell me: have you sent two hundred francs?"

Pierrot blushed, and was dumb.

- "Have you sent more," said the fairy. "Three hundred? no. Four? no. Five? no. Six? no. Have you sent even more than that, Pierrot? You are more generous than I supposed. Seven, eight, nine hundred? What! the whole million! Well, that is good of you, Pierrot."
- "Alas! good mother, I sent nothing at all," said Pierrot in confusion.
- "Well, my friend, what name do you give to such conduct? Now do you understand why, in spite of your apparent successes, you are not happy?"
 - "I do," said Pierrot.
 - "And will you profit by the lesson for the future?"
 - "Oh yes, godmother!"
- "Well, cheer up, Pierrot: your parents have not suffered by your neglect. I watch over them, give them what they want, and let them suppose it comes from you."

- "Oh, godmother, what have I done to deserve your kindnesses?" said Pierrot, kissing her hand tenderly.
- "You will deserve them one day," said the fairy.

 "Pekin was not built in an hour. You were born vain, thoughtless, ungrateful, like all the children of men.

 Later on you will become good and kind, like the children of the genii."
 - "Thanks to your protection," said Pierrot, happily.
- "Thanks to me if you like," said the fairy, "for I have been more useful to you than you think."
 - "How's that?" asked Pierrot.
- "It is to me that you owe the fair Bandoline's scorn. Do you think I was very unkind?"
- "By all the saints," cried Pierrot joyfully, "I don't know what I should have thought of your secret yesterday; but to-day I am awfully glad."
- "So much the better, Pierrot: it's a sign you are quite cured. I read the future, and I foresee easily enough, according to his disposition, all that a man will do in his time, and whether he will be happy or miserable. It is one branch of that great art of divination which I told you of, and which you don't understand, because it requires deep study, much devotion to science, an isolated life, and great experience of the world. The difference on this point between man and genii is this, that men can learn only after sixty years' continuous work, and we know from our birth and by intuition."
- "You are very fortunate to be so wise," said Pierrot, with a sigh.

- "Fortunate?" said the fairy, "do you think it is fortunate to know the future? Ah! poor child, may heaven keep you from this fortune and this knowledge!"
- "What reason had you for preventing the princess loving me?" said Pierrot.
- "A very good one, Pierrot: for you did not love her yourself, and after fifteen days of marriage you would have a miserable household. She is proud, and a king's daughter: she would have boasted of her superiority; you are haughty and hasty; you would have ill-treated her—"
 - "Oh!" said Pierrot.
- "Only by words, my friend; but with delicate people words are acts. She would have complained to her father, and he would have beheaded you."
- "Oh! oh!" said Pierrot, "he would have had to ask my consent."
- "No doubt, and as you are the strongest, you would have dethroned him, put him in prison, perhaps have killed him: you would then get rid of your wife and be king of China."
 - "That's not to be despised," said Pierrot thoughtfully.
- "Thus you would have committed two or three crimes to satisfy your own vanity."
- "You are right, godmother," said Pierrot, "and you speak as if you could read my conscience; but would not matters have turned out better? could not I have been happy with this scornful fair?"

"Let us suppose that there had been no blood spilt; let us suppose that Bandoline had made great efforts to please you, and submitted her temper to yours, what line do you think she would have taken with your parents? For, of course, you meant to live with your father and mother?"

"Of course," said Pierrot, who had never thought about it.

"Conceive the fair Bandoline full of respect and deference towards your old parents, to her mother-in-law, the miller's wife, and her father-in-law, the old miller! I said, Pierrot, you would not live fifteen days together: I ought to have said two!"

"O, wise and charming godmother," cried Pierrot, "always help me with your advice; for, for the future, I won't do anything of my own accord, and shall make it my boast to obey you! But are all women scornful, and must I love a lady miller, if I want to live happily with my parents?"

"There are women of all sorts," said the fairy, "just as there are men of all colours. It would be a great mistake to think all men were white or black, red or yellow, and a great injustice to say all women are gossips, wicked, scandalmongers, vain, and taken up with themselves and their dresses from morning till night. One finds continually that they are good, sensible, attached to their home, their husbands, and their children: your mother, for instance, is not she one of such?"

"Oh!" said Pierrot, "a better woman, or a better mother, cannot exist!"

"There are no better, Pierrot, but there are as good. Would not you wish to find one of this sort?"

"By heaven, I do; it is the first thing I pray for every morning."



"Search, and you will find her," said the fairy.

Thus conversing, the two travellers got on fast. The subject of conversation often changed. The fairy wanted to teach Pierrot his duty to himself and others, and gave him such good advice on the subject, that, if my readers had heard it, they would never listen to any other. Unfortunately, human language, so rich in lies, is poor in truth, and for fear of not repeating their conversation in

a worthy manner, I won't say a word about it. It is enough for you to know that Pierrot, hitherto spoilt by success, and highly elated by his own talent, understood for the first time that he was a feeble, poor creature, weak and prone to evil: that he ought to be ashamed of himself and his egotism, and that he promised to become a model for all men born, or to be born. For the rest, you can understand, without my having to enter into details, what would be the instructions of a fairy who was own daughter to the wise king of the genii, Solomon the Great.

Pierrot was delighted. "Ah, godmother," he would often say, "if all preachers resembled you, how pleasant virtue would be. But for the most part they are so wearisome, so pedantic, so grave and stiff: they put so much Latin in their sermons, and take so little trouble to explain themselves, that one can't help yawning as one listens, and waits impatiently for the end. But you, on the contrary, dear godmother, you talk so well, you say such interesting things, you have such a beautiful, sweet face, that everyone that looks at you feels drawn towards you, and listening to you seems like the angelic music of heaven."

The fairy Aurora smiled. "Friend Pierrot," she said, "why require from other people a perfection that is not natural? If all were handsome and good, kind and goodnatured, what difficulty would there be in being virtuous among them? Before you judge your neighbour, learn

to know yourself. For instance: you are prime minister of King Vantripan, and exercise supreme authority in his name. Tell me, now, have you ever cared about the happiness of your fellows, and turned the great power you have received from God to their service?"

- "Not much," said Pierrot.
- "Have you ever cared for anything except realizing your own fancies?"
 - "I own it."
- "Well, now is the time to try; here we are at Nankin. Set to work: and let me tell you that if you want to do your duty to the end, you have your work cut out."
 - "I'll try," said Pierrot.
- "Do; but don't announce yourself as the minister, or they will hide everything from you, and you will know nothing. It is only poor people that see all, because all the burdens fall on their backs."

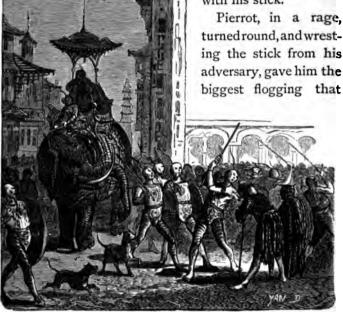
At this Pierrot dismounted, leaving the bridle on the horse's neck. The fairy did the same, and the two entered the town like poor pilgrims.

At the corner of the street Pierrot met a grand cortege. It was a rich mandarin going into the country with his wife and children. He was seated in a palanquin, carried by an elephant. Twenty servants preceded him, and cleared the way by hitting passers-by with sticks. Everybody hastily got out of the road. Pierrot, forgetting that nothing distinguishes a constable, when he is meanly dressed, from another citizen, walked on without

troubling about the mandarin, without getting in his way, and without avoiding him.

"Out of the way there, scoundrel!" said one of the servants, hitting him

with his stick.



ever fell on a respectable footman's shoulders. The others came up at their companion's cries, and rushed at Pierrot. He was so excited by their insolence that he would have knocked them down, if the good fairy had not interfered.

"Is this the way you fulfil your promise?" she said

to him, in a low tone. "At the very first accident, here you are beside yourself. Remember, you are a poor pilgrim, and not a great lord."

At these words Pierrot threwdown hisstick, crossed his arms, and stared at the mandarin's servants with a look that made the bravest of them recoil.

"You will see, now, how justice is administered in this country," said the fairy.

The noise and cries brought a large crowd together. In reality, all were delighted at Pierrot's act, but no one dared openly approve of it for fear of the bastinado.



The mandarin got out of his palanquin. He was a fat man, very red, marked with the small-pox, and renowned for his power and his wickedness. He was head of the supreme tribunal of that province, and in that capacity decided causes, without appeal.

"What's this?" he said, coming forward with an air suited to his dignity. "Who is the rascal who dared to strike one of my servants?"

"I am that rascal," said Pierrot proudly. "He struck

me first, and I did what anyone else would have done in my place."

"It's you, is it?" said the mandarin. "Seize the scoundrel, and beat him to death for his impudence."

"One moment," said Pierrot. "Do you condemn me for insolence to you, or for giving your servant back the blows he gave me?"

"This animal dares question me!" said the mandarin.
"Seize him!"

Three or four servants at once rushed at Pierrot.

"Listen," said he. "I've not provoked anybody, and don't want to hurt anybody. The first one who lays hand on me had better count his bones, so as to know them again and rearrange them at the last day. As for you, my fine lord, it's between you and me!"

With these words, notwithstanding his yells, he seized the mandarin by his long moustaches, which hung down to his waist, lifted him off the ground, and showed him to the people, like a showman exhibits his apes to his audience; then turning him with his feet up and his head down, he threw him up like a ball, caught him, and threw him again, amid cries of joy from the people, cries of alarm from the servants, and the indifference of all. When the game had lasted four or five minutes, Pierrot replaced him on his feet, hoisted him on to his elephant, and left him, saying—

"We shall meet again, sir mandarin."

The poor justice had no power left to answer. Anger

and indignation, that he, so great a dignitary, should have received such treatment, and that too in full view of the people, made him so beside himself with rage that he was ill for six months.

"By Brahma and Buddha," said the crowd, as it dispersed, "that was prompt and proper justice."

Our two travellers pursued their way without further adventure, and went to lodge at an inn which looked poor enough. They supped with a good appetite, thanks to the bird's-nest soup, which is so good that the Chinese proverb says, "Buddha, when he had created heaven and earth, invented bird's-nest soup." If you would like to try it, the best you can get you will find at Mr. Ki's, innkeeper at Pekin, one of my best friends, and the most celestial cook of all the celestial empire.

The next day Pierrot got up early and went for a walk in the town. He was soon accosted by a custom-house officer, who requested him very politely, according to Chinese custom, to take off his clothes, and have his pockets searched.

- "What for?" said Pierrot; "I haven't robbed anybody."
- "God forbid," said the custom-house officer devoutly, "that we should suspect you the least. But perhaps without knowing it you have brought something contraband into the town, in which case, sir, you will be kind enough to pay duty."
- "I have brought nothing in," said Pierrot. "Let me alone!" But following the fairy's advice he allowed him-

self to be searched. Nothing was found in his pockets, and he thought he was free; but the officer changing his mind said, "What stuff is your coat made of?"

- "Of thick wool," said Pierrot.
- "Just as I thought," said the officer.
- "What did you think?"
- "Wool, sir, is forbidden in Nankin, out of regard to the manufacturers who make other stuffs, not so convenient, but dearer. Be kind enough to give me your mantle and pay the duty."
- "I shall give you nothing, and pay nothing," said Pierrot. "I am not going to walk about the streets in my shirt sleeves: it would not be seemly. And, as for the duty, I ought not to pay that, because I did not know the law."
- "None are reputed ignorant of the law," said the custom-house officer sententiously.
 - "Not even strangers?" said Pierrot.
 - "Be kind enough to follow me," said the officer.
 - "Where to?"
 - "To prison."

At this moment the receiver of the customs came out of his office. He was a good-looking young man, well curled and oiled, with a glass in his eye, with which he stared at Pierrot, as if he were some strange animal.

"Sir," said Pierrot, "being a poor man, I inadvertently bought an alpaca mantle, as I could not get one of silk or velvet, and your officer is going to send me to prison."

"My good man, what do you expect?" said the receiver carelessly; "it's the law."

"It's the law of Nankin, but not of the rest of China; and I am not a citizen of Nankin."

"Go to prison, my friend," said the handsome receiver, patronisingly; "I'll look into your business another day. Some friends in the town are waiting for me, and we are going to have a bachelors' dinner."

"Sir," said Pierrot, whose temper was getting up, "don't have me sent to prison; maybe the cries of the unhappy man you have locked up will trouble your digestion."

"Never fear, my friend, these things are so common that I am quite accustomed to them."

"Sir, I beseech you to hear me a minute. Perhaps one day you will want me, and be suppliant in your turn, one often has need of a smaller man than oneself."

"What's the use of talking, my good fellow?" said the well-curled one. "Go to prison and you won't do it again. In a month or two, when I have time, I will consider your claims."

"And am I for two months to grind my teeth, invoking justice and heaven's revenge?" cried Pierrot.

"My good man, you tire me out. Officer, put this man in the dungeon: if I were to listen to all who protest their innocence, I should never finish."

The officer took Pierrot by the collar.

"Zounds," cried Pierrot, "you shall go to the dungeon

yourself, and stop there a long while. You scoundrel, is it thus that you get rid of men's liberty? Don't you know that liberty is more than life, and that you had better starve in freedom than gorge within four walls?"

Thus speaking, Pierrot took the receiver in one hand, and the officer in the other, and thrust them into the



cellar of the house, took the key, threw some bread and a pitcher of water through the ventilator, and then went back to the inn.

The house was full of people, who, without recognizing him, talked about his adventures. The mandarin's misfortune caused general excitement. Within the memory of the Chinese, no poor man had ever been heard of as revenging himself against a great lord: wherever he went

Pierrot was fated to astonish the people, who could not understand such uncommon pride and courage.

Though Pierrot was only the son of a peasant, I ought to tell my readers that his father had been one of the volunteers in the time of the great republic; and, you see, God blessed them and their posterity, because they fought for their country and for justice.

Pierrot, astonished at the noise, mixed among the groups of talkers, and had the pleasure, rare to listeners, of hearing himself well spoken of.

"Ah," said one old man, "if only he would put himself at our head he would get us justice."

"Shall we take arms ourselves, without waiting for him?" said another.

Hitherto they had spoken very freely, but at this unexpected proposal they looked at each other in a fright. When there was nothing to do but talk, orators were not wanting there, any more than in other countries; but when it was a question of action, sad silence ruled in the assembly. Pierrot, who till this time had been still and silent, now raised his voice.

"My good people of Nankin, whom have you got to complain about?" he asked.

They turned to him astounded.

"I'm only a simple pilgrim," he added, "but I can tell you as well as anybody what you had better do. If you revolt you will be punished; taxes will be doubled, and some of you will be impaled—that's inevitable. Why

don't you take your grievances to the grand constable at Pekin? he would get justice done."

"Yes," said a burgess, "he would send us back to the mandarin who was so ill-treated yesterday, and he, who is a friend of the governor's, will do what you just said, impale those who complain, as an example. We know these great lords' ways well enough."

Pierrot was obliged to allow that he spoke the truth.

"I know this Lord Pierrot a little," he said, "by reputation, and he is neither unjust, nor avaricious, nor biassed."

"No; but he lets his lieutenants act for him. What difference does it make to us if he is virtuous or not, if he does not concern himself about the government?"

"You're caught," said the fairy Aurora, who came up to rejoin her godson.

"As no one dares to join me," said Pierrot, "I will go alone to this notorious governor; he shall listen to me. What are your grievances?"

"We complain," said the old man who spoke before, "of receiving too many beatings and not enough rice. They take our tea by force, and at an unfair price, and then sell it back to us ten times dearer. They make us pay a tax on wool and cotton that our clothes are made of, another on the thread that sews them, another on needles, another on lining, and another for permission to stitch them together. Still, all that's nothing; but all these taxes together ought to produce no more than ten

millions, yet they do produce thirty, by the cruel energy of receivers, tax-collectors, toll-gatherers, mandarins, and governors, each of whom wants to get in advance a profit in accordance with his rank, and with what he considers he ought to have."

"Really," said Pierrot, "that is vexing."

"Vexing, sir pilgrim? rather call it deadly, for we cannot clothe ourselves, and have hard work to live."

"Be patient," said Pierrot, "and before the day's over you shall have justice."

"Is this man a god?" said the people, "or is he a madman playing the great man?"

Meanwhile an officer, with a file of soldiers behind him, seized Pierrot by the arm.

"Follow me immediately," he said.

"Where to?"

"To the governor's palace."

"I'm going there."

"All the better; you will have to explain your conduct, rascal! You put a receiver and collector in prison; you usurp our office; you meddle in administering justice!"

At each word he gave him a cuff, and the soldiers, seeing Pierrot was defenceless, hit him heavy blows on the back with the butt-end of their lances.

"By heaven," Pierrot said to himself, "I have a great mind to pay them out off-hand; but patience! I promised the fairy Aurora to wait till the end." In this way they led him to the governor's palace. An immense crowd followed him, laughing at the folly of the man, who, the moment before, had undertaken to see justice done to them, and was now about to be hanged without trial.

Pierrot was placed in a yard under a burning sun;



they took away his hat. In that climate the heat is insupportable. Pierrot asked for a drink, but the soldiers mocked him, and threw dust at him. His hands and feet were in irons.

"I'm thirsty," said Pierrot, a second time.

"You won't have long to wait," said the officer, "the pale is ready: you shall drink in the next world."

Presently the governor appeared.

"Is it you, you wretch," he said, "that struck the mandarin yesterday, and to-day threw a receiver and collector into a cellar, and at the same time promised the people justice against me?"

"Yes, my lord," said Pierrot humbly, and he told



what had taken place. When he had got half-way through his story, the governor said,—

"That will do-impale him."

"What, my lord," said Pierrot sadly, "is there no hope?"

This time the governor deigned no reply, but gave a sign that his orders should be executed.

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All at once Pierrot, straining his arms and legs, broke the irons, and threw them in the governor's face, whose nose swelled, and bled tremendously in consequence.

All the soldiers rushed at Pierrot, but he took one of their lances, ran the first, second, third, and fourth through the body, and then stuck the lance in the ground.

"You don't know how to impale, my friends," he said.
"This is how it is done!"

The soldiers fled, and the governor was left alone with the crowd, who applauded when they recognized their hero of yesterday.

Then, throwing off his woollen cloak, Pierrot displayed his uniform, and said,—

"I am Pierrot, grand constable, the conqueror of Pantafilando, and this is how I do justice."

"My lord constable," said the governor, throwing himself on his knees, and wiping his nose, which still bled, "my lord constable, have pity on me! Alas, if I had known who it was I had the sacrilegious audacity to order to be impaled, believe me my respect—"

"Yes, no doubt," said Pierrot, "if you had known that you had to do with someone stronger than yourself, you would have been as cowardly as you proved yourself insolent."

"My lord constable, forgive me!"

"If you have not committed any other crime," said Pierrot, "I pardon you; but first let us see if no one has any complaint to make. Speak on!" he said, turning to the crowd.

- "Sire," said a Nankin burgess, "he had my brother flogged to death, because my brother, who was very absent-minded, forgot to salute him in the street."
 - "Is that true?" said Pierrot.
 - "Yes, my lord," cried all.
- "Was I not to make the royal authority respected in my person?" said the governor.
- "Is that all you have to say in your defence?" Pierrot replied. "Anyone else?"
- "My lord," said another citizen, "he had my father impaled."
 - "What for?"
- "Because my father, who was very poor, could not pay the tax, nor the fine to which he was condemned."
 - "Is that true?" asked Pierrot.
- "Sire, I own it. Our great King Vantripan was in great want of money to make war on the Tartars."

Many others came forward. Some had had their eyes put out, others their ears cut off. Pierrot's face grew gloomy.

"I wished," he said, "that my first act of authority might be an act of mercy; but it is impossible. Mercy to the oppressor is a cruelty to the oppressed. Let him be impaled!"

This obtained applause from the crowd; but their bravos became loud and unanimous, when Pierrot added:

"For the future, whoever shall have a Chinese beaten with stripes, shall receive thrice as many himself: he deserves death. Whoever shall send a Chinese to prison without legal sentence, shall be imprisoned himself as many months as the complainant was days. Whoever shall condemn to death and execute a Chinese without my permission, shall be impaled himself."

Having proclaimed these good, wise, and splendid ordinances, as old Alcofribas, whose chronicles I am now translating, describes them, Pierrot left Nankin with the fairy Aurora.

"Well, Pierrot," said the fairy to him, when they were both riding in the country, "do you understand now why I told you to enter the town disguised? You see now, don't you, by what happened to you, who can defend yourself, what must happen to poor people who are without arms, or strength, and, owing to long oppression, without courage also?"

"You are quite right, wise godmother," said Pierrot; "that governor and mandarin are two abominable rascals, whom I'm very glad to have paid out."

"That's nothing," said the fairy, "you will soon see others."

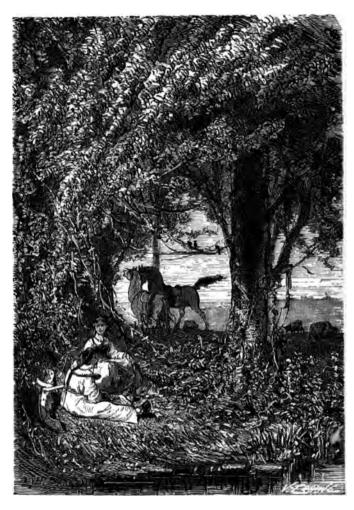
"It's not so pleasant as I thought," said Pierrot, "to be governor of a great kingdom."

The fairy smiled. She saw Pierrot was beginning to profit by experience.

Meanwhile the sun came down on their heads with



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They sat down in the thickest part of the wood near a stream which ran through a beautiful meadow.

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burning heat; a gentle wind raised the dust and blinded the travellers. "Let us stop a little in this wood," said the fairy, "and rest our horses."

They sat down in the thickest part of the wood near a stream which ran through a beautiful meadow. At the end of the meadow, half-way up a hill, the foot of which was washed by the stream, there was a very convenient and pretty house: the court in front was planted with old lime trees; at the back, on a pleasant slope towards the river, there was a large garden artificially shaded—not like those English gardens, which resemble coppices accidentally cut through, but like ours-like the gardens of French nurserymen, who are, my read ers believe me, the only gardeners in the world. charming place you could see fruit trees along the beds of vegetables, and along the walls the vines and peachtrees were covered with fruit. At the bottom of the garden there was a large lawn and a little plantation of the loveliest flowers in creation. The lawn was surrounded on all sides by lime trees. At some distance from the garden a score of cows with their calves were feeding. These cows, which were neither the Durham nor Schwytz breed, nor any other breed or half-breed renowned at agricultural shows, were nevertheless very handsome, fat, and well-conditioned. Higher up on the hill you could see a flock of sheep of the finest kind, feeding.

Pierrot from the thick of the wood looked at this pretty scene with pleasure.

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"How happy the inhabitants of that house must be!" he exclaimed. "I should like to live in such a place always."

The fairy had no time to answer. They heard a great noise in the wood, and saw a young girl of about fourteen, running, pursued by a royal tiger, who was making enormous springs to reach her. Seeing the fairy, she threw herself into her arms, and cried—

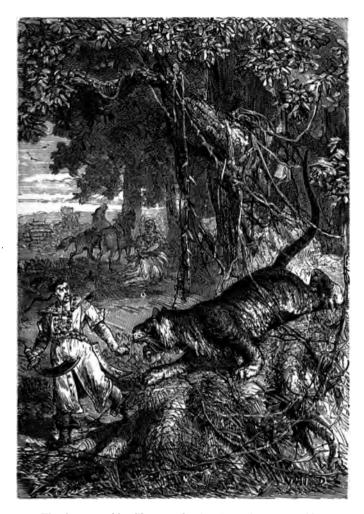
"Save me!"

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"Pierrot," said the fairy, "now is the time to show what you can do."

Pierrot, who did not need encouragement, threw himself in front of the tiger. It was a splendid sight to see these two adversaries confront one another: both man and tiger were perfectly proportioned and very handsome; both possessed remarkable power and agility; both were well armed, the one with his talons, the other with his Damascus blade, with hilt of gold mounted with diamonds. Sparks of fire came from the tiger's nostrils. Pierrot felt proud of having to defend somebody, and of showing his godmother that he was worthy of her.

The tiger, crouching like a cat that is going to jump on a table, suddenly sprang and leapt on Pierrot. He, with his feet firmly planted, received him on the point of his sword, which he ran into the tiger's belly up to the guard. The wound was severe, but not mortal. The tiger fell to the earth on his paws and prepared to spring again, but Pierrot was too quick for him. Taking his



The tiger, crouching like a cat that is going to jump on a table, suddenly sprang and leapt on Pierrot.

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sword by the blade, he struck his enemy's head with the hilt with such violence that the tiger was felled to the ground, and his head was flattened like a dried fig. He died directly.

Pierrot, wiping his sword, which dripped with blood, on the grass, went back to the fairy, and found her holding the young girl in her arms, for she had fainted. Pierrot could thus look at her at his ease, without annoying her. We will take the opportunity of doing the same.

Picture to yourselves, my friends, the most beautiful child that ever was seen. I am quite at a loss to describe her beauty in detail. She must be seen to gain an idea of her. She was more like an angel than a human being. Pierrot could not remark her forehead, or nose, or mouth in any detail, he was so struck by the whole. Her hair was of that glorious golden tint, like Juliet's, whose beauty and misfortunes Shakespeare singsabout. Her face was so pretty, intelligent, so winning and sweet, that you could not take your eyes off it. You could not say what it was pleased you. I consider she was like the sun, sending out rays around her; but they were the rays of natural and irresistible grace. Pierrot felt when he saw her that he would have more pleasure in dying for her, even without her knowing him, and without any reward, than he had ever hoped to have by marrying Bandoline, and becoming King of China.

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After a few minutes she opened her eyes, and found herself supported on the knees of the fairy. She thanked her sweetly, and turning her eyes on Pierrot she remembered the danger he had incurred, and smiled on him so ravishingly that he, poor fellow, to get a second smile like it, would have fought, not one by one, but all at once, all the tigers in creation.

The fairy Aurora then put a few questions to the young girl, who answered with a charming modesty. She told them that her name was Rosine, and that she lived with her mother at the little house they saw at the end of the meadow; that the meadow itself, the wood, and the hill belonged to her mother, and that this small fortune enabled them to live happily with a few servants, who cultivated the land under her mother's direction; that she had lost her father some years before, and that her mother, out of heart at his loss, came to live in the country; that their life was so quiet that for five years past, they had not left the little valley.

This tale, as you may well suppose, was not told in a breath; it is the summary of the successive answers she gave to the fairy's inquiries. It was easy to see that these questions were put for something more than curiosity. The good fairy had no need to ask Rosine about the things she knew perfectly well as a fairy; but she wished her to speak before Pierrot, who after a few minutes was so charmed, and seized with so much regard for her, that he neither dared speak to her, nor even look at her.

She finished her narrative by saying she had been walking alone a few minutes before, when the tiger suddenly rushed at her; that she flew she did not know where, and that she would certainly have perished had it not been for the heroic courage of Pierrot (the said Pierrot-felt himself filled with immoderate pride); but she must hasten to tell her mother, and begged the two travellers to come and receive her thanks.

At these words poor Pierrot looked at the fairy with such a suppliant air, and conjured her so with his eyes to accept the invitation, that the good fairy began to laugh, and at once feigning hesitation, pretended she must continue her journey.

"O, good godmother," cried Pierrot, in a fright, "this valley is so beautiful; let us rest here a little while!"

Rosine pressed her so graciously on her part, that Aurora, who really wished nothing better, consented to accompany them.

Rosine's mother, who was far from suspecting the danger her daughter had incurred, or the service Pierrot had rendered her, was slightly astonished at the arrival of the two strangers. Nevertheless, she received them with a noble and gracious politeness, quickly guessing, from the fairy's manner, that though she was dressed very plainly, she had to deal with a person of distinction. She herself was a woman of great worth, of about forty years of age, and with beauty which in her youth must have been like her

daughter's, and which was still to be admired, because more set and more striking. She spoke with great feeling to Pierrot of the service he had performed, and lightly reprimanded her daughter for venturing in the wood all alone.

The latter excused herself sweetly and modestly, saying she had never known a tiger in the forest, nor for six leagues round, and promised to expose her mother's tender care to no more such alarms. After some conversation of this kind, the good lady spread a delicate meal before her guests, in which, as you may believe, there was no overcrowding of substantial foods and provisions, but in which were all the garden fruits of the season. Pierrot's heart was so full of joy that he could hardly eat. As for the fairy, who only lived on otto of roses and morning dew, she took a little fruit for form's sake, and soon they all went into the garden.

The handsome widow was pleased to show her guests all over the garden; it was all her own work. Though she was not strong enough for actual digging, and though her other occupations would not have given her time for it, she would give up to no one in planting, sowing, grafting, and cutting. Rosine, though much less clever, was no less zealous than her mother, and herself weeded the paths and tended the beds. A gardener dug the vegetable beds, and brought the water from the well. By means of hose they could water the whole garden with little trouble. Pierrot was so charmed with all he

saw, that he was ready to dig and water on the spot. He discarded his diamond-hilted sword, and set to work with a zeal that quite amused the fairy.

"Pierrot," she said, under her breath, "have you a taste for gardening that you have not told me of? It was too bad of you, my friend, for I would have taken pains to prevent it. I thought you only liked fighting, and being covered with glory, and governing people and empires. Where did you get these rustic tastes from?"

"Ah, godmother," Pierrot replied, "how beautiful it is here; the air so pure, the sky so blue, the valley so green and splendid! Is it not much better to graft and water all one's life, than to impale mandarins and to disimpale poor devils?"

The fairy did not insist on it; she saw plainly enough that Pierrot was a hundred leagues from war, military glory, grand constableship, and what pleased her most of all, away from Princess Bandoline; you would have thought, from seeing how he worked, weeded, dug, drew lines, and planted lettuces, that he had never done anything else. This ought not to astonish my readers, for Pierrot had a natural quickness for all he did; he was nimble with his hands and feet; moreover, he had seen his father work, and had often worked with him. Good blood cannot be concealed. When he saw a mattock or rake, he thought of his father's rake or pickaxe, and understood how it is all very well for great lords to walk about in court dress, and fill up their time in

making obeisances, because they did not know any other trade, and other men were ready to put up with it; but that if everybody carried on that trade we should all die of hunger in a week. The young girl, seeing him work so energetically, gladly helped him in her turn, and very shortly, without trouble, a pleasant, familiar intimacy sprung up between them, which made Pierrot think digging was the most delightful thing in the world, and that if the angels and saints had once digged, they would not want to do anything else through eternity.

But he had to leave his attractive occupation, and answer the call of the fairy and Rosine's mother, who wanted him to see the stables, meadows, plough-lands, and flocks. The day was drawing in, and Pierrot left his digging, and his companion in watering, with regret; but he was much consoled when he saw out of the corner of his eye, that the two horses were bridleless and shut up in the stable, and that the fairy did not speak of leaving.

The whole place was in excellent order. The fruit was arranged on straw in the cellar. Thousands of apples faced thousands of pears of the best sorts, which melted in one's mouth; millions of greengages, ripened by the sun, and just touched by the bees, who had only left a scar, were next to splendid and luscious peaches. And this was not half the crop: the remainder being still on the trees in the garden and orchard. The meadow, which was very large, was divided in two by a



Thousands of apples faced thousands of pears of the best sorts. Page 110.



well-kept hedge. The part not reserved for pasture was strewn with the newly-cut aftermath, and its delicious scent filled the whole valley. Men and women were occupied in tossing the hay, and seemed to work with a will, not as if they were compelled to do it, or as if they were paid to do it; for, thanks to the generosity of Rosine's mother, and her care to give each one work suited to their powers, there were no poor, no idlers, and no beggars in the valley.

At some distance from the house, there were five or six thatched cottages, well built, and very tidy. Each was inhabited by an honest and hard-working family, and the children played round the door on a plot, levelled and beautified by green turf, thicker and fresher than that in the finest English park. A large chestnut, two hundred years old, stretched its branches far and wide. There was nowhere to be seen, either before the houses, or before the stables, those heaps of filth and rubbish which soil and disfigure most of the villages in France. The manure was conveyed to reservoirs by subterranean drains covered over with grass and stones, and from these reservoirs it was used on the surrounding land. conclude, at the top of the hill there was a very simple church erected, and but lately built, whose gilded cross stood out well from the deep blue sky, and reflected the last rays of the setting sun. I must tell you, my friends, that the village was filled with Christians, who had been lately converted by a French missionary.

Pierrot was full of inexpressible happiness. Every minute he interrupted the talk to put questions without waiting for them to be answered. He walked, ran, came backwards and forwards with no object or reason; he shouted with joy, leaped over walls and hedges like a frisky colt; he climbed the trees and hung from the branches with his arms, and then let himself fall to the ground. Aurora, the fairy, looked at him, smiling at his great and unwontedly high spirits. She soon guessed the reason, but as usual waited for him to tell her.

In the evening, when they were alone, she asked Pierrot what time he wished to start in the morning. The poor fellow fell from heaven to earth, and remained silent for a little. Then he timidly asked her what was the pressing business which obliged them to take leave so soon of a lady who had so kindly received them.

"My friend," said the fairy, "we must not abuse her hospitality; it is a virtue which soon grows weary. If we go to-morrow they will regret us; but if we stop here too long she will end by asking us why we don't go."

Pierrot did not dare answer. He thought in his inmost heart that he should not annoy anyone by stopping a very long time, but he neither dared nor could say why. At last he found a way by which he thought he could clearly hide his real thoughts.

"Perhaps," he said to the fairy, "we are not such unwelcome guests? I can work on the land, and you saw yourself, godmother, that I got along well enough.

These ladies must want a man whom they can have confidence in, and who would do the hardest of the work for them, and who would protect them and defend them if necessary."

"And you, who haven't got a beard yet, you would like to be this confidential man?"

"Why not?" said Pierrot, "King Vantripan has confided the administration of the whole of China to me!"

"He showed much wisdom, certainly, in such a choice! Here is the grand constable, the grand admiral, the terror of the Tartars, and succourer of the oppressed, who for a fancy gives up constableship and admiralship and all the rest, that he may go and sow beans and toss hay! The whole kingdom is in confusion because my Lord Pierrot has been kindly received at a farm!"

"Well, after all," said Pierrot, "if that's all the difficulty, I would throw all my appointments as admiral and constable to the winds and regain my freedom."

"And you would come here and dig, and water, and weed, under pretty Rosine's eyes? Do you know, you rattlebrain, if this arrangement would please her, as well as you; and above all, whether her mother would allow it?"

This question put a stop to poor Pierrot's remarks. The fairy had compassion on his embarrassment. She alway's began by making sensible objections, and then finished by yielding, and hunting for means of satisfying her desolate godson. Oh, my friends! you might walk

over all the earth, for a century, without finding a heart that came near that of the charming fairy. She had been brought up by Solomon himself, and he had given her three rays,—the first that of light, or intelligence; the second of goodness; the third of grace and beauty. These three rays, taken from those in heaven itself, whose brightness the angels cannot bear, met in the common centre of the fairy's heart.

"I know all about it," she said to Pierrot. "Cheer up. I'll undertake to keep you here for eight days, and after that you must go back to your duties."

Pierrot, transported with joy at these words, fell at her feet and kissed her hands in an ecstasy of gladness and gratitude. The good fairy was happy because she had made him happy; and this is so great a happiness that God reserves it for himself almost entirely, while he gives men the shadow of it. The fairy's duty now recalled her to the court of the King of the Genii, and she at once went off to kiss the white and scented beard of the venerable Solomon.

Next day, without knowing why, Pierrot found himself installed and treated as an old friend. By day he worked in the garden or fields, under the eye of Rosine or her mother, and in his zeal for working, cultivating, and sowing, he did as much as six men. In the evening, on coming back from work, he got his reward for his trouble. He read aloud the best works of the old poets, with so much spirit and delicacy that poor Rosine

was astonished to have read the same things twenty times before without having discovered anything of what charmed her so when Pierrot read it. Sometimes her mother would tell one of those old tales, born with the



human race, and not dying with it. Such as the story of poor Geneviève de Brabant, condemned to death by the traitor Golo, and re-found in the forest by her husband Duke Sigefroi. Such is the story of the fair Sakountala, and King Douchmanta, wandering in the

forest of lotus and palms that cover the borders of the Ganges. Such, too, the story of the Wandering Jew, condemned to walk for more than a thousand years. The Last Judgment will put an end to his torment.

Such, too, the lamentable history of St. Roch and his dog, which concludes with such a touching incident, that everybody weeps forthwith.

"He, better than most,
Free from blame was found,
And gave up the ghost
'Twixt the paws of his hound."

"My children," says old Alcofribas, "I have known people irreverent enough to laugh at the last couplet. Ah! believe me, there are some hearts so hardened that we must mistrust them."

When it came to Pierrot's turn to tell his story, he hesitated some time through modesty. At last, however, he began to tell his adventures, but he left out, as you may believe, the impression made on him by the fair Bandoline's fine eyes. Had he forgotten them, or what? I know not. I think he had quite forgotten that the princess was still in this world, and he cared no more for her or the kingdom of China, than for an empty nut. However that might be, no one called him to account for this oblivion; but when he told of his fight with the terrible Pantafilando, Rosine turned pale, and nothing less than the end of the story, and the death of the giant, completely reassured her.

Although Pierrot, by the fairy's counsel, had become more modest, he could not help being a little proud of himself, and letting a little of his legitimate pride appear in his narrative; but he was greatly mortified at the conclusion the fair Rosine's mother came to from his discourse.

"My lord," she said, "we shall remember all our lives



the service you have rendered us, and the honour you have done us by remaining at our little farm for a few days; but allow me to remind you of what your modesty has forgotten. I mean that the administration of a great kingdom is committed to your charge, and we shall be guilty of a crime against the state if we seek to keep you longer with us. For fifteen days past you have

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condescended to share our amusements and our work. It is time for us to let you go whither glory and God's will call you."

If the moon had fallen on Pierrot's head, it would not have astonished him more. He was stunned for a time, and knew not what to reply. Under the good lady's politeness, he felt he was formally dismissed. At last he found words, and protested a thousand times that the state did not need him: that King Vantripan would soon find ministers quite as zealous as himself for the welfare of China; that it was unheard-of that candidates should fail in these duties; that, moreover, if China wanted admirals and constables for a century, he was not a Chinese, nor obliged to replace all the ministers who were dying or were incapable: that his own happiness was to till the land in that delicious valley, and that he only asked permission to work on there to the end of time.

The good lady, however, remained inflexible. She had decided not without much reflection, and would not be moved either by the prayers or tears of the unhappy Pierrot, nor by the too visible regret of Rosine at so hasty a departure. All Pierrot could get was permission to come back when his tour was over and peace had been made with the Tartars, whose new King Kabardantes, younger brother to Pantafilando, was threatening the Chinese frontier.

The next day Pierrot went off sadly on his good horse

Fendlair, not without often looking behind him, till the house and valley were lost to view. Then he hurried on, and arrived after two days at the mouth of the Yellow River, where he was going to review the Chinese fleet.

The simplicity of his manners and equipage in no way showed him to be a great man: no one went in front of him, and he slept at an inn like all ordinary travellers. The next day, without telling anyone of his visit, he went towards the port, and asked a sailor, who was smoking opium, where he should find the Chinese fleet of war. The sailor laughed, and pointed out with his hand a splendid ship, decked with flags, gilded outside, and adorned inside with silk velvet.

"Well, that's the admiral's ship," said Pierrot, "but where is the fleet?"

"The fleet and the admiral's ship are one and the same," said the sailor.

Pierrot could not believe his eyes. He took a boat to go to the flag ship. A single sailor guarded it: the others were on shore waiting the arrival of his excellency the lord admiral. Pierrot then went to the palace of the said lord, and was introduced, after waiting three hours.

"My lord," he said, approaching the admiral, "I am charged by King Vantripan to inform your excellency that you are to set sail this evening, and descend on the coast of Japan."

"And what are we to do at Japan?" asked the admiral.

"My lord, I was charged to give you the order, and not to discuss it."

"My dear fellow," said the admiral, slapping Pierrot familiarly on the shoulder, "you tell the king that he must wait for a more favourable occasion, and that the fleet is not ready."

"What does it lack?" asked Pierrot.

"Oh, very little, a mere bagatelle really," said the admiral, picking his teeth. "It lacks—ships, and men, and provisions, and arms, and money."

"Is it possible?" said Pierrot. "All those things were entrusted to you. What have you done with them?"

"Of course, my friend," said the admiral, shaking his toothpick in Pierrot's face, "you know that it is not polite for a subaltern to question his superior; moreover, if you ask me another question, I shall throw you into the water like a carcass."

"You'll think twice before you do," said Pierrot resolutely.

At these words the admiral, who had turned round and had been pacing the room, came back, and, looking at him closely, saw in his eyes a pride so uncommon among the officers under his command, that he changed his tone at once, and said,—

"It was a joke, my dear fellow, that I made to try you."

"The joke was a poor one," Pierrot replied; "and I for my part was not joking. I demand an account of fifty vessels of war, thirty thousand sailors, quantities of

provisions, arms, and money, which you were entrusted with."

"One last word," said the admiral. "You seem a good fellow, and have plenty of spirit, and I think we shall soon settle matters. Choose one of two alternatives: either take a hundred thousand pounds, which I will



count out to you at once, and go to Pekin, and tell the king all is in order, that the fleet is well equipped, and will sail to-night, or else be impaled at once, without further trial."

"My choice is made," said Pierrot. "Give me an account of what you have done."

"You are dogged! Take care! Look here—is a

hundred thousand too little? Do you want a million? two? ten? Suppose I have amassed twenty or nearly thirty millions, ten millions will make a good hole in it. Will you or not?"

"I want your account," said Pierrot.

"Then you shall have neither account nor money." And he rang the bell, at which six negroes appeared.

"Seize that man," he said; "gag him, and throw him into the water. Get the flag-ship ready, I'm going up the river."

It was hot, and the windows into the garden were open. Pierrot, without moving, took one negro in his right hand and another in his left, and threw them on to the garden borders: two others followed in the same way, and the last two, seeing they were alone, begged Pierrot's permission to jump out of their own accord, without being forced, which Pierrot willingly allowed. The six negroes at once got up and ran to the town.

The admiral was dumb with fright. Pierrot crossed his arms, and said to him,—

"Well, my friend, which of us two is best able to give his account to Heaven? Since you cannot escape, tell me, for the last time, what have you done with the fleet?"

"I've sold it," said the admiral.

[&]quot;And the sailors?"

[&]quot; I've dismissed them."

[&]quot;And the money?"

[&]quot; Is in my coffers."

"Very well: take your cloak and leave the country. If you are found here in twenty-four hours' time, I'll have you hanged."



The admiral did not wait to be told twice. He ran to the port, embarked, was taken by some Malay pirates, delivered by some philanthropic Englishmen, and was brought to London, where he appeared at the International Exhibition under the name of the "Mandarin

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with the crystal button!" His name was Ki-Li-Tcheou-Tsin. If ever you meet him, my friends, take off your hats; for he was a very great lord in his own country before Pierrot made him a poor wretch.

Our hero was not content with doing justice to the admiral. He recalled the dismissed sailors, and set to work to build a new fleet, and equipped it. He provided victuals and ammunition out of the money found in the admiral's coffers, and continued his journey with his usual success, amid blessings from the people and curses from the mandarins. It would take too long here to tell all the acts of justice, humanity, and generosity which made his journey remarkable. It is enough for you to know, that all the times that the Chinese have murmured or revolted since, they have demanded the laws and decrees of the wise and valiant Pierrot.

All seemed to conduce to his happiness, but Heaven had still heavy trials for him. While he was hoping that the fair Rosine would hear of some of his grand doings, and that she would love him the more (for the first effect of true love is to lift the soul above itself, and inspire it with noble and sublime thoughts), he learnt that Kabardantes had at last finished his preparations, and was marching at the head of five hundred thousand Tartars, and that poor King Vantripan, dying of terror, had recalled his constable with all speed to give him the command of the Chinese army. I will tell you, friends, in the next chapter, by what new exploits, and by what

devotion Pierrot deserved the fairy Aurora's protection, and the charming Rosine's love. I will finish this with a judicious reflection of old Alcofribas. Here it is, translated word for word:

"You may ask," says the sage magician, "what there is so marvellous in this third adventure of Pierrot, as neither enchantment nor prodigy is found in it. But, my children, do you not consider it a marvel that a minister, armed with so much power, and who was reforming abuses, should administer true justice, punish the wicked, and protect the weak? Be sure that ever since the world has been a world, neither on the earth, nor in Venus, nor in Saturn, or any other of the planets which revolve round the sun, has such a miraculous thing ever been known: and I think, though I may be mistaken, that Pierrot's love was not foreign to a virtue so new and so extraordinary."

That is the old magician's conclusion, and it's mine too.





FOURTH ADVENTURE.

PIERROT PUTS FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND TARTARS TO FLIGHT.



THE wording of the order which recalled Pierrot to the court, and gave him the command of the army, was so peremptory, that he did not think

he could go out of his way, even a few leagues, to see

the fair Rosine, though only for an hour; she had become the pole-star of all his thoughts, the secret spring of all his actions. China, however, was in so great a danger that the poor grand constable had to defer his visit till happier times.

Formerly Pierrot would not have hesitated an instant, and would have let the empire be in danger by his negligence; but the counsels of the fairy Aurora had made quite another man of him. He arrived at court without retinue, and unannounced, according to his custom; and learning that King Vantripan was at dinner, he took a walk in the garden, under the windows of the dining-hall. The windows were open because of the heat, and in a few minutes he heard his name mentioned so loudly, that without wishing to listen—a habit he hated—he could not help hearing the following conversation.

King Vantripan and Prince Horribilis were talking together.

"Sire," said the prince, "don't you think Pierrot is very long in coming, and that he ought to be here?"

"And how do you wish him to come? It is scarcely five days since I recalled him, and the messenger had two hundred leagues to go. If Pierrot had whisked along——"

"If he had wished to come, you mean, your majesty," interrupted Horribilis.

All the courtiers pretended to think the pun very

good; it was a princely joke; but you will see, my friends, that it was not much to praise.

Vantripan, jealous of his son's success, wanted to do the same himself, and asked—

- " Horribilis."
- "Sire."
- "Do you know why a snuff-maker doesn't make his fortune?"
 - "No, sire."
 - "Because the buyer knows too much."

The whole court roared with laughter. Vantripan looked round with an air of triumph.

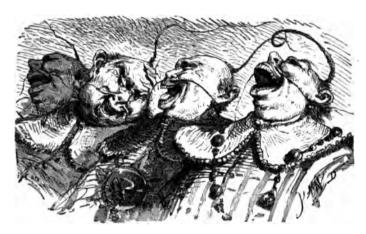
- "That's horribly bad, father," said Horribilis; "you'll find it in every book of riddles. It's a stale joke."
- "By jingo!" cried Vantripan, "did you ever hear such insolence? Well, since you have read all the riddle-books, tell me what is the difference between Alexander and a cooper."
- "That's very difficult, really!" said Horribilis. "Alexander cut the Poles to pieces, and a cooper cuts pieces to the poles."
- "Confound it!" said Vantripan, "the rascal will not let me have one!"

The courtiers seeing the turn the conversation had taken, set to work in their turn, and made the finest jokes in the world. Each found one for himself and he passed it on like a ball, in answer to one from his neighbour. They talked, laughed, howled, disputed; there was a

horrible tumult, an exact copy of the court of King Petaud.

At last Vantripan knocked on the table three times with his knife; at which all became silent.

"Do you know," he said, "why frogs have no tails?" This unexpected question posed everybody. The fair



Bandoline herself, with her mother, set to work to find a solution for so deep and profound a problem. She tried in vain. Horribilis did the same, and so did they all. After a few minutes—

"No!" they cried with one voice.

"No more do I," answered the fat king.

At this there was an inextinguishable laughter throughout the company, like that described in Homer at the table of the gods.

Horribilis, keeping in view what he wanted to say, soon brought the talk back to Pierrot. After having praised him insincerely for a few minutes, he added,—

"Still, he is well rewarded for his impartiality, for they write me that everywhere he has had a royal reception; that the people press round him, and wanted, in these last few days, to proclaim him king."

"Indeed!" cried Vantripan, frightened.

"Oh, make your mind easy, father—he refused the throne."

"You see he is a faithful subject, and my best friend."

"You are right, sire; but he who has refused once will one day perhaps accept, and the delay in obeying your orders will be a good way of continuing his intrigues in the provinces, and gaining for himself a strong party there, before resorting to force."

Up to this point Pierrot was calm; but he could no longer restrain his desire to confound the backbiter, and climbing from the garden into the room, by the projection of the wall, he stood opposite Horribilis, who turned pale at the sight of him.

"Sire," said Pierrot gravely, "I learn that complaints are made about my delay. To obey you, I have done two hundred leagues on horseback in ten hours. Is any thing else necessary to prove my zeal?"

"No, friend Pierrot," cried the fat Vantripan. "I am perfectly satisfied with you."

"I know," resumed Pierrot, "that it is said that I

abuse my power. I shall do so no longer. I return it into your majesty's hand, with the sword which it gave me; may it be given to a man more worthy such honour than I am." And drawing his sword he presented it to the king by the hilt.

"You are mistaken, friend Pierrot; I believe none of these calumnies."

"Calumnies, father?" asked Horribilis proudly.

"Yes, Horribilis, calumnies. Heir presumptive, retire; you irritate my nerves. You are always trying to make me quarrel with my true and only friend. Go a hundred leagues from here, and do not let us hear any more of you."

"No, sire," said Pierrot haughtily. "Your majesty should not send your son into exile. It is not right that I should cause a family quarrel. It would be a very bad return for all your kindnesses to me."

"Pierrot," said Vantripan, "you don't know what you are talking about. He is your worst enemy at this court. He will do you so much unkindness that you will be obliged to leave me; and what should I do without you?"

"It makes no difference, sire; I shall go if you do exile him."

"As you choose, then," said Vantripan. "But talk of something else, and retake the sword of command. Go and reassemble the army, and march to the frontier."

"When shall I set out?" said Pierrot.

"To-morrow, at noon. Before you go I will give you my last instructions. Go and rest yourself."

Pierrot left, and was followed by the whole court, till the king was alone with the queen.

"Why," said the queen, "do you give so much power to a subject? It is giving him a temptation to treason."

"There," said Vantripan, "as usual, you give the same advice as Horribilis."

"Horribilis was right," said the queen; "and you treated him to-night unkindly and unjustly."

"If he is not satisfied with me," the king answered, "let him go. I shan't run after him."

"That's all very well," said the queen, "if he goes alone; but we, my daughter and I, are determined to follow him and leave his unnatural father."

"Very well," said Vantripan impatiently; "follow him, if you like." Meanwhile in reality he was much put out.

"Yes," said the queen, taking her handkerchief, "we shall follow him, and you will be barbarous enough to sacrifice us all to a stranger."

With these words she drew from her pocket a small onion, freshly peeled, which she kept for these occasions, and irritated her eyes, so that she began to weep copiously.

Poor Vantripan began to consider himself a wicked husband and very bad father. He wanted to console his wife, but she would not listen to him. When she had done crying she began to sob, and then went into hysterics, and used her legs and arms so mercilessly that the poor king, though accustomed to like scenes, thought she would either die or go mad. At the same time, she rolled her eyes in a terrifying way.

"Must I ring, and call the women?" fat Vantripan said to himself. "What a scandal! they will think I have ill-treated her, and perhaps struck her."

Suddenly, seeing a bottle full of water, he was going to throw it over her, when she made a sign that she was better, and would go to her room. Vantripan, thanking heaven that created water, and the wise man who invented bottles, took her to the door gently, and was going to leave her, when she kept him, and said,—

"You will give Horribilis the command of the army?"

"I must, if you wish it, but Pierrot will be his lieutenant."

"I consent. You are a good father and a great king."

"I fear I'm nothing but a fool," thought Vantripan.
"I sacrifice Pierrot, lest I should incur my wife's anger.
If only I can have peace at home! One thing comforts me—that there does not exist a husband who would not have been as big a fool as I was, in a like case."

With this melancholy reflection he took a nap. Do the same, my friends, if you have not already. "The man who can sleep," says old Alcofribas, "is the friend of the gods."

The next day, at noon, Pierrot appeared at the council.

Vantripan looked at him for some time in an embarrassed way. He played with his snuff-box, trying to find out how to begin.

- "Pierrot," he said at last, "are you my friend?"
- "Oh, sire, can you doubt my devotion?"
- "Well, give me a proof now."
- "I'm ready. What must I do?"
- "Will you share the command of the army with Horribilis?"

Pierrot began to laugh. "Sire," he said, "from what I see, you have slept over your plan. Why do you want us to share the command, when you could give the whole to him?"

"My friend," said the king, "I want Horribilis to have his first passage of arms under your direction; but as it is not etiquette that a prince of the blood royal should obey a mere subject—"

"Sire," said Pierrot, "you mistake. I am not a subject. I came to take your service; you accepted me. You might have refused me. If you choose to withdraw my appointment to-day, do so, sire. However, as your majesty is liable to alter your mind so often, I cannot well count on the continuation of your favour. I would rather go to-day of my own accord, than be dismissed later."

"There, there," said Vantripan, "how angry you get. Alas! why can't I please everybody, and make you live comfortably with my wife and my son?"

"Sire, I am a stranger, and for that reason suspected by all," said Pierrot. "Let me go, and you will live more peaceably, and so shall I."

"How ungrateful!" said the king, beginning to cry.
"If you go, who is to command the army?"

"Prince Horribilis, sire."

"He will get beaten."

"That is your affair."

"He will take care of himself, and dishonour my name."

"What can I do?" said Pierrot.

"Friend, stop with us."

"I cannot, sire. Whoever commands is responsible. If you give me a colleague, I am so no longer. If you give me a master, that's worse still. Let Prince Horribilis come to the army with me, if you like; but let him obey me, or I will undertake nothing."

"I promise for him," said Vantripan. "I give you my royal word. Here are your full powers. Now go."

"That's a good man," thought Pierrot, as he went home, "and a poor one."

Accordingly he made his preparations; that is to say, he had Fendlair saddled, and got out his travelling-cloak. Three days after he made his appearance at the camp. The Chinese army, numbering 800,000 men, awaited the Tartars, under shelter of the famous wall that separates China from the vast empire of the Unknown Isles. My readers will know that this wall was built to preserve the

Chinese from the attacks of the Tartar cavalry, which is world-renowned. As most of my friends have not had an opportunity of seeing this famous rampart, you will not be unwilling, I think, for old Alcofribas to give you an idea of it. He says,—

"This wall is more than a hundred feet high, and thirty feet wide. It is surmounted by towers, built at regular intervals. It stretches'a distance of six hundred leagues, and makes the frontier of two countries, sometimes bounding the open country, sometimes overhanging fearful precipices. At the foot of each tower there are two doors, one opening on the Chinese side, the other facing the Unknown Isles."

Pierrot had scarcely been in camp two days, before a noise like rolling thunder, and pattering hail on the roofs of houses, and the confused disorder of a fair, announced the enemy's approach. At this noise the unhappy Chinese believed themselves to be all dead men. They threw down their arms and rushed about the camp in desperate confusion. Pierrot quickly put a stop to the confusion by publishing an order to this effect, that the first man found out of his place and rank would be hanged as an example to others. The soldiers quickly ran, seized their arms and flocked to the standard, while the general went to the top of a tower to reconnoitre the Tartar army.

It was a terrible and a grand sight. Imagine five hundred thousand horsemen, mounted on the bare backs

Tartars to Flight.

of small, savage, and shaggy horses. Each horseman was armed with a bow. a lance. sabre. and а At their head advanced the formidable Kabardantes, younger brother of Pantafilando. was much shorter than his brother. and measured twenty feet less in height, but his strength was tremendous. He would wrestle hand to hand, unarmed, with bears, and tear them to pieces with his hands; he could carry on



his saddle a mass of silver of twenty thousand pounds

weight. He did not kill his enemies, but he beat them. and ground them to powder. His horse, of a size to match himself, and of extraordinary power, had a horrible look about it; you could not gaze at it without trembling. Kabardantes was the son of the famous Tchitchitchatchitchof, emperor of the Unknown Isles, and of the cruel sorceress Tautrika, whose name is so celebrated in the annals of Kamtschatka. He had learned from his mother some practices of the black art. He could at his will raise and dissolve clouds, he could invoke winds and fogs, and could employ demons in his service. His ferocity knew no limits; he had massacred a hundred thousand Chinese in Pantafilando's lifetime, and had made a heap of their heads. to the top of which he repaired on gloomy starlight nights to consult the planets and invoke the infernal powers. An invisible hand had written on his forehead when he was asleep these three letters below.



which in magic language signifies

KILL!

and he really seemed only to live in order to kill, burn, massacre, and exterminate. He slaughtered women, children and old people without pity; he had above all an inexplicable hatred of children. He loved to drink their blood, hot and fresh spilt. He was the most

horrible monster anyone ever saw. Another thing that added to the terror he inspired was, that he was invulnerable except in the pit of the stomach. Everywhere else swords, lances, arrows, balls, bounded off his skin without cutting through it, as if they were made of india-rubber.

Such was the redoubtable warrior, whose name alone sent terror into all Chinese hearts. Pierrot himself could hardly support his gaze at first; but when he thought of what Rosine's opinion would be if she saw him, or if she knew that he had retired before danger, he felt so brave that a hundred thousand Kabardanteses would not have made him budge an inch.

Meanwhile he did not wish to hazard the destiny of China by a battle. He saw well enough that his army wanted discipline, so while waiting his opportunity, he posted guards along the walls and inside the towers, and was careful in exercising his men.

Horribilis arrived in camp a few days after, and demanded in a haughty tone why he had not offered battle to the enemy. Pierrot with firm courtesy gave his reasons, and all the staff was of his opinion.

"My father," said Horribilis, "did not send you to parley, but to fight. We have known for a long while that you are more prudent than brave."

Pierrot bit his lips to prevent his answering sharply; but without letting the prince's remark disconcert him, he continued his military drills. Horribilis, who was

trying to find a chance of ruining him, loudly deplored the constable's cowardice, which he said compromised the existence of the state. No one paid any attention to him; but one day Pierrot, out of patience, said to him in the presence of the whole army,—

"My lord, be kind enough to come with me to the head of the advance guard, and we will make a general sortie against the Tartars."

"It is not fitting," said Horribilis with dignity, "that I should uselessly expose lives valuable to the state and to my family. I will go and ask my father's permission, and if his majesty allows me, you will see I shall be the first to rush into the thick of it."

He took care not to write, as they guessed he would not; and Pierrot, content with having silenced him, did not speak of it further.

Meanwhile Kabardantes, furious at finding himself stopped by the wall, and by Pierrot's prudence, determined on a general assault. The Tartars' embarrassment was great, for they could not scale the walls on horse-back, and they were very bad at fighting on foot. Kabardantes having thought over the difficulty, had an enormous quantity of ladders made, each of them more than a hundred and forty feet long, and determined that the scaling should begin at nine o'clock the next morning, after breakfast.

At the time fixed Pierrot, advised of the enemy's design by his sentinels, lined the summit of the wall with

infantry, whose only duty was to throw stones on the Tartars' heads during the assault, and throw down their ladders into the ditch. The height of the wall was such that they had nothing to fear from the assailants if the assailed did their duty. The two generals each addressed their armies in words that old Alcofribas has preserved. Kabardantes said:—

"Brave Tartars, go to the assault without fear. If you set foot over the rampart, China is yours. Kill, sack, burn! I reserve for myself as slaves all below the age of twenty. Kill or sell the rest, and take their lands."

"Long live the generous Kabardantes!" cried the Tartars.



This cry was so loud and ringing with its unanimity, that the wall was shaken. Some stones fell from the battlements.

"See," said Kabardantes, "the very gods are on your side. The wall crumbles to make way for you."

Applause arose on all hands; but this same incident frightened the Chinese.

"It is not to make way for them," said Pierrot, "but to crush them, that these stones fell of their own accord on their heads." The truth was that these stones were not securely fixed with Roman cement, and Pierrot knew it well enough, but he gave his cowardly soldiers the only encouragement they could understand.

"You have heard that Tartar," he added, "and you know what awaits you. Let those who love their country, their family, their liberty, remember that they are defending these treasures with their swords. At all events, let each of you do as I do."

With these words he turned up his sleeves, like a good workman who is going to do a hard job. All the soldiers imitated him, and waited the first shock with firmly-planted feet.

Kabardantes planted a ladder against the wall, and began scaling it, and in an instant more than a thousand ladders were fixed and covered with Tartars. You could see them pressing, the one behind the other, like black ants on an ant-hill. They shouted terribly, and it was only Pierrot's look that kept the Chinese at their posts.

When Kabardantes reached the top of the ladder, he seized the battlement with his hand, and said to Pierrot, who was waiting for him,—

"Ah, you cur! It was you who killed Pantafilando. You shall die now!"

At the same minute he put his foot on the wall. Pierrot caught hold of it, lifted it up in the air, upset





"Well," cried Pierrot, "how high is the wall? You ought to know now!"

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the giant's equilibrium, and threw him into the moat, head foremost. With this tremendous fall anyone else would have been smashed to pieces, but the Tartar was only stunned by the blow.

"Well," cried Pierrot to him, "how high is the wall? You ought to know now!"

With these words, he seized by the two uprights a ladder swarming with Tartars, who were climbing up after their emperor, and balanced it in the air for a while, as if he did not know what to do with it. The wretched people on it screamed with rage and terror. At last Pierrot flung it violently on to a neighbouring ladder; they both fell on to a third, which fell on a fourth, which displaced a fifth.

At this terrible sight there was silence on all sides; the ladders fell one on the other, till the very last was upset, though they extended for half a mile, the distance which formed the field of battle.

One of them presented a very curious sight: as each Tartar held his lance straight behind his companion, the man on the top rung received the point of the lance in such an unfortunate way that he found himself spitted alive like a lark; the second, in his turn, received the lance of the third, and so on, till the last man, who was lucky enough to jump off before the fall of the ladder, and escape by flight.

More than twenty thousand Tartars perished at the first assault by the hand of Pierrot alone. "The number

is not surprising," says old Alcofribas, "if you remember that there were more than a thousand ladders, and that each of them was crammed with men to the very last round, that there were more than one hundred and fifty rounds, and that all fell down at once." This would be far short of the mark, if we calculate all who were disabled in the affair, those who had their arms fractured, their legs broken, their ribs forced in, their eyes poked out, and their noses made into jelly. But let it be understood that we prefer truth to glory for our hero; there were not more than twenty thousand dead.

This is quite enough too, if we consider the time it takes to nourish, bring up, and teach a man; the pains necessary to be taken with him; the expense his parents have before he is good for anything, before he knows how to work, speak, and conduct himself properly. If only people would consider this, my dear friends, believe me, there would be fewer conquerors; if there were still any, if any passionate people still wished to kill their fellows and cover themselves with glory, all other men would fall on them and confine them as furious madmen who needed shower-baths and mustard-plaisters.

Still Pierrot was right in breaking the Tartars' necks. One ought to have a horror of those who only care for strength and violence; but that is not enough to ensure being happy; we must also know how to settle them with the sword; for it is the duty of all honest and courageous folk to defend their parents, friends, country.

and themselves; and take my word for it, none are honest who either do not know how, or dare not do so.

This was Pierrot's opinion; but as he could not teach the Tartars, he was obliged to correct them by force. The Gospel says that "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." Pierrot, by lapse of time, and by the fairy's hints, was growing wise; he only used his strength to protect the feeble and oppressed; for that object he would never hesitate, even if it cost him his life.

After the avalanche of the ladders, a confused murmur rose in the air, which soon turned into a fearful chorus of cries and curses that could have been heard even in the deep ravines of the Atlas mountains. Pierrot crossed his arms, and for some time gazed at his work in silence.

"Alas!" he said, with a sigh, "all these poor wretches have fathers, mothers, and perhaps children. What miserable folly possessed them to set on us like savage dogs, or wild beasts looking for food? Heaven is my witness, that I hate these bloody conflicts; but how could I leave these poor Chinese to be massacred, without defending them? And how wretched they are, too, being so cowardly, and incapable of defending themselves! Must might always conquer right?"

While plunged in these deep thoughts, Kabardantes came up with a great deal of noise, and cried out to him,—

"Pierrot, you overcame me by treachery; but I will revenge myself!"

With this he seized an enormous boulder which was close by and hurled it at Pierrot's head. He avoided the blow, and the boulder fell into the Chinese ranks. Five or six were crushed and the others fled in confusion; but Pierrot instantly rallied them, and made them return to their posts. He was expecting another attempt at scaling, but the Tartars dared not try a second assault on that day. They lacked ladders, and moreover they wanted to bury their dead.

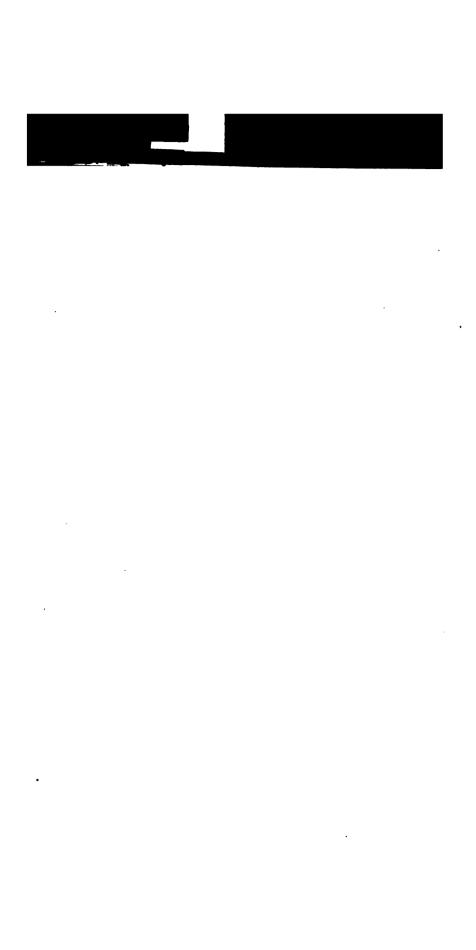
On returning to his tent the grand constable received the congratulations of his principal officers. The soldiers shouted "Long live Pierrot!" There was a general illumination. They drank, sang, and held great rejoicings. Pierrot thanked Heaven, and the fairy Aurora, to whom he owed his great success.

"Ah!" he would say to himself, "I only want to have my godmother near me, and to live peaceably at Rosine's farm to make my happiness complete."

The moment he expressed this sentiment the good fairy appeared; Pierrot, as was his custom, knelt before her, and kissed her hands with respectful tenderness.

"Pierrot," said Aurora, "I am satisfied with you; you are beginning to understand and fulfil your duties: I am going to reward you—give me your hand."

Pierrot did so, and instantly found himself transported to a village that he well knew; he recognized





"What are you thinking about, Rosine?" said her mother. "I was thinking how happy I am, to be living like this near you."

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the fair Rosine's house, and his heart began to throb violently.

"Go straight in," said the fairy, " and do not speak to anyone. I have made you invisible. Only see and hear what is said and done."

The sun was setting behind the hill, and out-door work was over. You could see, on all sides, the cows, sheep, fowls, and all animals on the farm, coming home. In the kitchen, supper was preparing for those coming Already the table was laid, and back from work. Rosine's mother was superintending the preparations. When all was ready, she sat down with her daughter before the door, and they both relapsed into silence, listening to the sweet and perpetual sound which comes on summer evenings from the woods, fields, and meadows, and which seems like a prayer put up by all nature to the Creator. Soon the moon rose in the east and lighted up this peaceful scene. The church clock rang out the angelus, and all the villagers lifted their hearts to heaven. Rosine and her mother knelt, and after some moments' devotion again sat down to gaze on the pure, blue vault of heaven, in which the stars were beginning to shine.

"What are you thinking about, Rosine?" said her mother.

"I was thinking, mother, how happy I am to be living like this near you, in the peace we enjoy here; and fancy to myself that if there's any happiness on earth, it must be found in our home."

"Yes, you must thank God for your happiness; but who can tell if it will last? Everything on the earth is mortal. I must die——"

"Oh! mamma!" And Rosine threw herself into her mother's arms.

"War is declared: who knows if the enemy will come here?"

"Oh, as for that, mamma, never fear. Is not Lord Pierrot commander of our army, and is there a braver warrior in all the world?"

"Who told you he commanded the army?"

"I saw it in the papers," said the young girl, blushing.

"Do you read the papers now, then? you used not to be able to bear them."

Here Rosine found herself so unable to explain what her mother had guessed before, that I must tell you that she took no more interest in politics than before, but she took very great interest in Pierrot. Her mother forbore to ask her any further questions.

Pierrot was seized with such great joy that he would have revealed himself, but the fairy Aurora restrained him.

"Look!" she said, at the same time touching Rosine with her wand.

It seemed to Pierrot that the young girl's heart became transparent, and that he could see her most secret thoughts; but her heart was so pure, so generous, so tender, that Pierrot was seized with a strong desire to

throw himself on his knees before her, and worship her as the most perfect creation of God.

"Pierrot," said the fairy, "I have destined her for you; but you must win her by deeds, in comparison of which what you have already done is nothing. You must become the best and the bravest of men; you must put



aside for ever your personal interests, your vanity, your desire for man's applause. At such a cost as this, do you still wish to be her husband?"

"I do wish it," cried Pierrot.

"Ponder well," said the fairy, "that you will not always be happy and covered with glory, you will one day be calumniated, perhaps slighted; and that you will have, in order to support the cruel ordeal, to possess a

courage still greater, still more immovable, and still more rare than that which you have shown hitherto."

"I do wish it," repeated Pierrot.

At these words the good fairy put on Rosine's finger, without her perceiving it, a ring just like the one she had formerly given to Pierrot.

"There," she said, "you are betrothed." Then taking Pierrot's hand, in a second she had him carried back to his tent by means of the genii under her orders.

The next day our hero, surveying the enemy's camp from the top of the rampart, saw them getting ready all kinds of ballistæ, battering rams, catapults, and other war machines which Kabardantes had had prepared. sight troubled him a good deal; he could not disguise from himself that the soldiers could not stand against the Tartar cavalry in open country, and he saw clearly from these preparations that the wall which sheltered his army would not resist long. But still the evil could not be avoided. He had large quantities of wood, oil, and rock brought together, with which to burn or crush the assailants, and offered rewards for the bravest and strongest soldiers. Day and night he had drills to teach them to use the bow, the sword, and the battle-axe. At last, after waiting a month, he saw that the enemy were about to attempt a second assault. One morning the whole Tartar army got under arms. Sixty horses dragged an enormous machine, particulars about which I cannot give you, because old Alcofribas has neglected to do so; but the engineers of Kabardantes declared it could break a mountain, and make a road through it. The machine came up slowly, till it was opposite the great Chinese wall.

Suddenly Kabardantes gave the signal: the ram cut like an arrow, and crashed against the wall, which gave way to a width of more than twenty feet, with great noise.

Immediately Kabardantes and the bravest of his army rushed forward to enter the breach. The whole Chinese army uttered a cry of terror; but Pierrot was on the watch. When Kabardantes set foot inside the entrenchment he opened his mouth to shout as loud as he could, "Victory!" Pierrot seized this moment, and taking advantage of the fact that the falling stones prevented his retreating very fast, quickly threw into his open mouth an enormous cauldron of boiling oil, which he had ready. Kabardantes shut his mouth too late, and to his surprise swallowed the whole contents of the cauldron. The oil, going into his stomach, burnt him dreadfully. He fled, throwing down his lance, and ran to his camp, uttering horrible cries.

"What's the matter, my lord?" asked his major-domo.

The exasperated Kabardantes gave him such a kick
that the unhappy major-domo was hurled six hundred

feet away, and fell dead among the rocks. Taught by this example, the other officers kept their distance, and fled instead of answering his call. Meanwhile the

unhappy emperor was boiling internally, and struggled with desperate contortions. At last the chief surgeon arrived, and seeing he had no wound, he thought he had fever, and wanted to feel his pulse. Kabardantes opened his mouth, and made a sign that his malady came from thence.

"He has eaten too much," thought the surgeon; "it is an indigestion." And he was going to prepare a mixture, but the wretched prince, savage at being misunderstood, seized the surgeon by the neck and legs, and broke him in two over his knee. After this everybody ran away, and he was left alone, swearing and storming at Pierrot, cursing a thousand times the stupid thought that made him cry victory at the wrong time, and talking of nothing but flaying his enemy alive. But let us leave the ferocious emperor, and return to our hero.

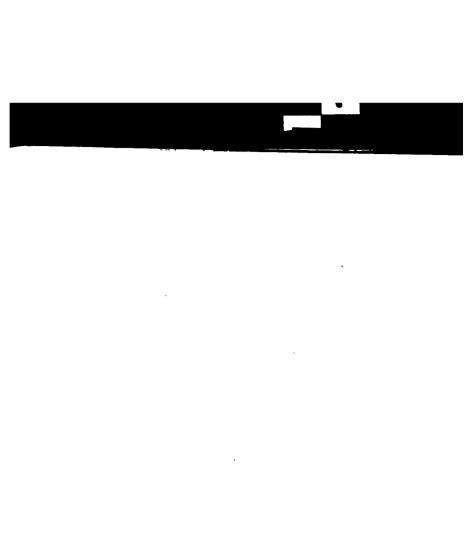
He had not time to congratulate himself much on Kabardantes' flight, and the good trick he had played him, for the enemy's guards, who followed their leader, stood in their turn in the breach.

"Forward!" cried Pierrot to his soldiers; and to set an example, with one blow with his sword he cut a Tartar officer in two. By a back stroke he cut off the head of the next, and cut the right shoulder of the third. The fourth, who was a warrior renowned in the Tartar army for his courage, advanced on Pierrot, and tried to run him through with his lance. Pierrot parried the blow, and seizing a spit from before the fire, on



Kabardantes opened his mouth and made a sign that his malady came from thence.

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which was a half-roasted turkey, he ran it through the Tartar.

"There's a turkey, and a goose!" cried Pierrot.

Animated by his example, the Chinese did wonders, and the fight before the breach became desperate. Still the Tartars, always reinforced, were getting the best of it, till Pierrot thought of a means of stopping them which was successful.

He had an enormous quantity of fagots thrown into the breach and set fire to them. When the flames began to mount in the air, no Tartar attempted to pass the entrenchment, and Pierrot having nothing more to do with any except those who had passed in, and who were not more than two or three thousand strong, cut them to pieces: none of them surrendered.

The day was nearly over, and it was too late to begin another attack. Pierrot had the breach repaired during the night, and the Chinese worked so hard that by morning the wall was completed, and only a few cinders and the spilt blood showed the place of yesterday's fight. The fire had reached Kabardantes' machines and burnt them; so he had to make these difficult machines again. The Tartar army grumbled at the incapacity of their chief, while Kabardantes, still furious, was confined to his bed, without power of moving, eating, or drinking, because his inside was burnt.

The second fight brought Pierrot still more honour than the first. All admitted that he had shown a

courage, presence of mind, and skill worthy of the greatest generals. Unfortunately, the more his glory increased the more his enemies sought means of ruining him.

Horribilis, who took good care to keep out of the way during the combat, wrote to Vantripan that Pierrot was sole master of the army, that he gave all offices to his creatures, and that he openly aspired to the throne. If this wicked prince had dared to get Pierrot assassinated he would have done so at once, but no one was willing to undertake such a job for him: some feared the fury of the soldiers, others feared Pierrot himself still more. Even when not on his guard, everyone knew him to be so strong, so quick, so intrepid, so prompt to make up his mind, that he would be sure to kill the first who attacked him, even in his sleep.

But Horribilis wanted him killed at any price, or at least exiled. He had taken into his confidence an old magician, whose soul was black with crimes, and who hated Pierrot with the hate that bad people always cherish against the good. The magician was called Tristemplète. He was short, with eyes deep set under his shaggy eyebrows, his nose hooked and almost touching his chin, his cheek-bones prominent, and his manner that of a ferocious scoundrel; his eyes, like a cat's, saw by night as well as by day. This fellow, who had often deserved the gallows, had only escaped death by the understanding he had with the demons. This was all

the better for Horribilis, who found him just suited to his purpose. Both never ceased searching for some way of ruining Pierrot.

"How can we do it?" said Horribilis. "He is unassailable."



Tristemplète smiled, and said, "The most unassailable has some weak point; we must get hold of that." And taking out of his pocket a fearful book of magic, he uttered the sacramental words—

which signify in magic language, Kara brankara, and in English, "Slave, approach!" It is the formula used



for invoking the fiend.

He appeared anon.
"Master," he said,
"you have called me.
What do you wish?"

Here I pass by in silence a long talk between the fiend and the magician. Alcofribas, who knew it all, reported it verbatim, with the magic formulas, but I am afraid, my friends, of showing them to you, lest I should unwittingly be leading you on the wrong road.

The result was that Horribilis learnt that poor Pierrot loved the daughter of a farmer to distraction, and that they had been betrothed by the fairy Aurora. Alas! tremble and sigh, all considerate hearts,

for from that day date the first misfortunes of our friend.

As soon as Horribilis knew all this he left the army with his confidant, took Rosine and her mother up in a cloud, by the power of the demon who obeyed Tristemplète, and shut them up in a castle which was covered with plates of steel worked by the infernal spirits, and which had the peculiarity of being invisible.

The exact moment that Horribilis committed this crime, Pierrot's magic ring cut his finger as if it were alive, and his heart beat violently without his knowing why. It was one of those presentiments which Heaven sends to tender souls. but which does not prevent the evil. Pierrot. sad and full of melancholy thoughts, had recourse to Aurora.



The good fairy told him all that had passed and tried to console him. Pierrot tore his hair in despair.

"Wretch that I am," he said, "why did I leave them? what need had I to fight the Tartars? Ah, godmother, it was that fatal absence that ruined them. Who knows where they are now? who knows in what enemy's land they are, or what treatment they have to submit

to? Perish China a thousand times, and all the Chinese with her! I go to rejoin my dear Rosine; I go!"

"You shall not go, Pierrot," said the fairy, with a tender firmness; "you have more important duties to fulfil." And when she saw that he would not hear her, she added,—

"I know where your betrothed is, and will watch over her; fear nothing, do your duty as a man of courage, and rest assured that after the war I myself will help you to recover Rosine."

"Will you swear it?" said Pierrot, a little consoled.

"I promise you by the white beard of Solomon, whom all the genii obey."

With these words she disappeared.

Pierrot, impatient to find and avenge Rosine, was most anxious to finish the war by a battle. He knew the fairy too well to fear that any evil would happen to his beloved while he was absent, but he did fear that she would be weary with the imprisonment, that she would become sad, and fall ill. Poor Pierrot feared everything when he thought about her. And well he might, for if there ever has been anything beautiful, sweet, kind, and gracious in the world, then it was the fair Rosine. I only know of one fault in her; and that was a tiny grain of caprice, but the grain was so tiny, so difficult to discover, and hid itself so quickly, that one had hardly time to discover it. After all, it was the point in which her human nature showed itself; for as you know, my

friends, nothing is perfect in this world. Whatever she was, Pierrot would have given the empire of China, Mongolia, and the peninsula of Corea, to be able to press even one of her slippers to his heart. Those who do not approve of this folly on Pierrot's part had better hang themselves at once; they are not worthy to live.

Meanwhile Kabardantes was cured. His burns had left no mark, except an awful scar on his face, which made him more repulsive than ever. The muscle of his lips was contracted, and turned back on to itself, and the unhappy prince made such dreadful efforts to give his jaws their old elasticity, that all his assistants fled at Besides this, and some stomach ache he had, the sight. when without thinking he drank his soup too hot, he slept, ate, and digested uncommonly well. The first time he burnt himself afresh with hot soup, he seized the steward and threwhim head first into an immense copper. wherein the dinner of five hundred thousand Tartars was cooking. At the end of the meal the poor man's breeches were found. As these were made of gutta-percha, even Tartar teeth could not get through them. They sang a De profundis, instead of saying the usual grace, and no more was heard of it.

The next day the new steward, fearing the same treatment, served a dinner entirely of cold meats. Kabardantes flew into a tremendous passion. "Come here!" he cried.

Instead of obeying him the poor steward ran out of the door to save himself, but he was too late.

The emperor threw a lance at him, which ran him through the middle and pinned him to the wall, where he remained fixed. All applauded this feat, and ran off, for fear of a fresh accident. At last Kabardantes found a steward to his fancy. This was an intrepid Tartar of



high birth and of much renown in the army, but who had never had anything to do with cooking. The first day he began his business. Kabardantes remarked that he always remained behind his He asked the reason for this modesty. The Tartar replied at once that it was his official place: then, when the prince insisted, he drew his dagger and fiercely declared that if the dinner were bad, he should, without much interval, cut off Kabardantes' head, in order to avert the fate of his predecessors from himself.

"Your daring pleases me," said the emperor. "But in order

to dine in peace, I can't have a man behind me always ready to cut off my head. Leave your duties and go back to the army. I appoint you chief lieutenant."

All admired and praised in a loud voice the magnanimity of Kabardantes, and in a low voice the happy daring of the steward. The latter soon became his master's minister and favourite. This history, which is most veracious, because it comes from the lips of old Alcofribas, suggested to that wise magician the following reflection:—

"That in all circumstances, courage and frankness are the best means of getting out of difficulties. Only cowards lie, and cowardice gains no one esteem or concern."

That, my children, is the reflection of the old sage: if you think it is good, profit by it; if not, put it in the rubbish basket.

All this time neither Kabardantes' magnanimity, nor his favourite's daring (his name, I forgot to say, and it is important for the rest of the story, was Trautmanchkof), gave the Tartar army anything to eat. Several months had now gone by without any success attending their arms, and provisions began to run short. Calves, cows, pigs, were all gone. Kabardantes himself was reduced to feeding on horseflesh, and that used not to be good food, believe me, before the learned men of the Institute discovered how to make other people eat it in order that they might eat beef and poultry more easily themselves.

On the other hand the Chinese army, well provided with everything by Pierrot's care, and disciplined to put up with the sight and the attacks of the Tartars, became daily more courageous. The most cowardly desired a battle, believing themselves sure of victory under

Pierrot's direction. Kabardantes reddened with rage at finding himself caught in a trap. He dared not retreat for fear of being dethroned by his subjects, infuriated by defeat, nor did he dare try scaling the wall again, after the two former unsuccessful trials. At last he hit on a sure means of re-establishing the vigour of his forces, and even of fighting on horseback in spite of the great wall.

He got together all the waggons and carts he could find in the Unknown Isles. He had them dragged by oxen and taken to the foot of the wall, filled with enormous stones. In a short time they made a great heap, which Kabardantes had covered with gravel and earth from the country round. This heap of rock, gravel, and earth heaped up together, sloped gently from the top of the Chinese wall down to the Tartar camp and enabled the cavalry to walk and even gallop without fear to the top of the wall. There they must fight hand to hand, and in a combat of that kind Kabardantes and his men did not doubt they should be victorious.

On the other side, Pierrot carefully watched the progress of the work. He had the earth undermined under the great mass heaped up by the enemy; the works were supported by vaults of very solid masonry, and he put five or six hundred tons of powder into the vaults, which were nearly a hundred feet deep. At the same time at a distance of fifty feet inside the great

wall he had a second wall constructed like it. The space of fifty feet between the two walls was meant to act as a ditch, into which the whole Tartar cavalry, going at full gallop, would be obliged to leap. He also had drawbridges made, which could be pulled up or down at will, and which would give the Chinese means of retreat in case of attack.

More than a month passed while these preparations on each side were going on. Each army remained on guard but avoided attacking its enemy. At last Kabardantes thought a good opportunity presented itself.

"With what sauce shall I eat you?" he cried to Pierrot.

"With oil," responded the other.

At this reminder, the emperor of the Unknown Isles was mad with passion, and gave the signal for the attack. Four hundred thousand mounted Tartars (the others had died of fatigue, or under Pierrot's blows), with one movement, cantered up the esplanade made for them. It was a splendid sight; all the horses galloped together; and the riders, with lances in rest, and uttering fearful cries, struck terror into the hearts of the Chinese. Pierrot, perceiving this, gave the word to retreat. They retired in good order by means of the drawbridges, though closely pursued. The cavalry, angry at seeing them retire, broke into full gallop, and arrived just as the last Chinese disappeared, and the drawbridges were being pulled up.

None of the Tartars suspected the trap, for Pierrot had concealed his works by means of palisades, which were fixed on the wall, and which seemed to have no other aim beyond concealing the cowardice of the Chinese. The day of the battle he had these palisades taken down and thrown into the ditch between the walls. Thus the Tartars were much astonished when, on arriving at the platform of the wall, they heard the mocking voice of Pierrot calling to them—

"To find the bottom, tumble in!"

Verily, it was a tumble. The first thirty ranks of the cavalry, galloping with slackened reins, leapt into the ditch, without being able to check their horses. The others, pulling up in time, stopped on the brink, and looked sadly on their comrades' fate. These latter fell one over the other, with the dull sounds of broken heads, legs, and ribs. The horses writhed on the men, who, pierced with their own weapons, filled the ditch with blood. The Chinese rolled enormous boulders on to them, which finished those whom the fall had not killed at once.

In the midst of the disaster Pierrot's tender heart was seized with compassion. He checked his soldiers, and offered to give the wretched men who were struggling against death, life and liberty if they would surrender. They all accepted and cords were thrown to them, by which they were pulled up one by one. They

were sent to the interior of China, where they were employed in making the roads, cultivating the land, and taking care of horses, duties they performed better than anybody.

"Only one refused to surrender, and that was Kabardantes himself. He was the first to fall into the ditch with his horse, but as he was invulnerable, and his bones were made of material harder than iron, he took no harm from his fall. He swore tremendously, though, when he saw the whole advance guard of his army coming down on his head.

"Scoundrel!" he cried out to Pierrot, "you dare not fight me openly, but you set traps for me."

"As I would for a savage beast," said Pierrot, "and, in fact, you are both a beast and a savage one. As for fighting you openly, I should be very glad to, if I had not something better to do just at this moment; but be sure the time will come."

Pierrot did not wish to shout his reasons out loud, but the whole army knew them without his telling. He was not afraid of risking his life, only he knew not to whom to leave the command after his death. He felt only scorn for Horribilis's cowardice, and none of the Chinese generals were sufficiently illustrious by birth and courage for him to confide the fate of the army to them. So he would gladly have consented to the combat if the war had been finished, and the Tartar army had consented to retire after the death of its chief; but he must first of

all thrash the Tartars so completely that they would not dare to come to China any more.

These latter were very difficult to discourage. If they were astonished at first at the depth of the trench and the sad fate of their comrades, the astonishment did not last long, and they remained on the top of the wall, unable to advance and unwilling to retire.

At last one of them, Trautmanchkof, who had taken the command after the fall of Kabardantes, sent to fetch fagots, stones, and earth, and gave orders to have the trench filled up. When he heard this order Pierrot came forward to the edge of the rampart, and said—

"My friends, you have now a capital opportunity of making peace, if you desire it. I am conqueror, and I offer it to you. I respect your courage, and I promise to return you your prisoners. On this agreement the two nations will be friends for ever. Take my word for it, a good peace is better than the most glorious war."

"Go and preach somewhere else!" Trautmanchkof cried back to him. "We shan't leave till we have avenged the fate of our men by the blood of yours!"

At the same time he bent his bow and shot an arrow at Pierrot. It wounded him slightly in the hand. He cried out—

"It is your choice, then. Let the blood spilt be on your head!" and he gave the signal to set fire to the powder. The artificers (for at that time powder was

only used for explosions, for they had no guns, cannons, or pistols) put the slow match to the train of powder. which communicated with the powder barrels. instant a fearful explosion took place, and blew up the entire battle-field. The inside wall itself, behind which the Chinese were sheltered was broken. An immense quantity of gravel and rock was hurled into the air to an extraordinary height, and amidst the gravel and rock more than 150,000 Tartars with their horses perished: the rest fled at full gallop for two leagues beyond the camp. Kabardantes, who was still between the two walls, in the trench, was blown into the Chinese camp, and fell back on the ground without being hurt. He at once rushed through the Chinese, who did not try to stop him, and by a wonderful leap he cleared the trench, and reached the Tartar side free. Then, without stopping to notice the fearful sight, he set off to rejoin his army, which galloped in disorder to the border of the Unknown Isles.

Pierrot at once had another trench dug and the esplanade cleared away. But he need not have feared a fresh assault so soon. As soon as Kabardantes reached his army he was hooted on all sides: some complimented him on his skill in jumping, others compared him to an india-rubber ball which falls to the earth and rebounds again; others again reproached him with their defeat, and with curses showed him their wounds received in his service; the most excited talked about stoning him. The

giant, frightened by the increasing rage of the Tartars, cried, in a voice that rose above the tumult, that the defeat must be attributed to Pierrot's treachery, and not to his own lack of skill; that no one could have foreseen the existence of the fatal ditch; that he foresaw it less than anyone, for he had been the first to leap into it; but that he was ready to avenge his army and himself by challenging Pierrot to single combat. "For the rest," he added, as he finished, "if any of you thinks himself more brave and skilful than I am, let him come and say so to my face, and I'll show him what stuff I'm made of."

With these words, seizing the soldier nearest to him by the leg, he twirled him in the air like a leaf and pitched him on to a neighbouring mountain. wretched man was smashed to pieces. On this prompt action the Tartar army recognized its chief, and each man went back to his rank in silence. The next day the whole army returned to the camp, but there was nothing left of it except the tent-pegs and the cinders of the camp fires; for during the night Pierrot had had the provisions and baggage taken away. When they discovered this, consternation seized the Tartars, and Kabardantes himself began to despair of keeping them together under his standard. An armistice of ten days was agreed upon, during which each party buried their dead, for even on the Chinese side there had been some victims to the explosion.

During this time the emperor of the Unknown Isles tore his hair and beard with despair. He insulted Pierrot at the top of his voice, and challenged him to come down on to the plain and fight him; but the prudent Pierrot, though really piqued, did not condescend to answer for the wise reasons we gave above about the public safety. He waited till hunger and weariness might force the Tartars to retreat.

A siege of this kind could not last long. The besieged, well provided with arms and victuals, growing daily more disciplined and more confident in their general, began to dread the enemy no longer. At night Pierrot made sorties, harassed the Tartars, seized their convoys and horses, and at last reduced them to such scarcity of all necessaries, that one fine morning, taking their arms and banners, with the officers and band at their head, they marched to Kabardantes and told him that they were going home, and that if he wished to continue the war he must do so by himself. The spokesman of the army was that same Trautmanchkof, only a few days since the royal favourite, but who now, suspecting the emperor's courage and boldness, was secretly aspiring to the throne.

Kabardantes, beside himself with passion, seized his weapon and tried to fall on the officers; but they, without waiting for him, went off at full gallop with all the army after them, taking the road to the Unknown Isles. Kabardantes ran after his soldiers and killed some of them

which only had the effect of giving fresh legs to the lame and wings to the slow. All of a sudden a great noise was heard: it was Pierrot's army, which, with its general at the head, was pursuing the Tartars, singing as they came the refrain—

" If John Nivell's dog you call, Off he goes, tail and all."

The unfortunate Kabardantes wanted to turn to bay



like a boar pursued by dogs; but he lost courage when he saw Pierrot spurring on to meet him with all his army at his back.

"Wait for me," cried Pierrot, who, mounted on Fendlair, and as proud as Artaban, was delighted with the result of his prudence and valour. At the same time he sang to a new air the well-known words:—

"Tartars are brave
At all times, save
When they meet their enemies."

"Wait for me, thou great warrior! wait for me, thou conqueror of conquerors!"

Kabardantes did not lose time by answering. He ran so fast, and was so long-winded, that in an hour he had done more than twenty leagues. Pierrot seeing it was hopeless to catch him, rejoined his army.

He was welcomed with acclamation. Without waiting for orders all the soldiers hastened to meet him. They carried at the ends of their lances chaplets of leaves, which they threw under his horse's feet. Fendlair, who had as much intelligence as spirit, curvetted gracefully to either side, as if to thank the crowd for the honour it paid to his rider. Little by little the enthusiasm became so strong and violent that they took up Pierrot and his horse and carried them in their arms. Pierrot, affected by these marks of recognition, knew not how to thank them or how to avoid this triumph.

"How sweet all this homage would be," he thought, "if I could share it with Rosine."

Horribilis alone took no share in the general delight. Shut up in his tent with his wretched companion, he waited the effect of some letters he had written to his father.

At last the much-desired answer came, and just as Pierrot reached his tent, surrounded by his officers, a courier handed him a despatch from the king. Pierrot

read it, and, without altering his voice, said to those round him—

"His majesty recalls me, and bids me give up the command of the army to Prince Horribilis."

At this unexpected news consternation spread among them all.

"What shall we do?" said the generals. "If the grand constable leaves us we are lost. The Tartars will return in force—all would be over in an hour."

The news spread from the officers to the soldiers, and their joy turned into deep depression. They who feared nothing under Pierrot's orders, feared for everything under Horribilis's commands. They at once assembled in their tents, and then in the large open ground in the camp. They resolved not to obey the order, to keep Pierrot in spite of it, to send Horribilis back, and, if necessary, to proclaim Pierrot king of China. On all sides rose the cries—"Long live the king! Long live Pierrot I.! Death to Horribilis! Down with Vantripan and all his dynasty!"

Hearing these cries, Horribilis hid himself behind some tapestry with Tristemplète, to hear the result. He had not to wait long; Pierrot came out of his tent and advanced to the crowd. All cried out, "Long live Pierrot." He signed to them that he was going to speak, and silence instantly reigned. He said:—

"Friends, what do these acclamations, and this tumult mean? I hear that some seditious persons want to disobey the king and keep me here in spite of myself! Is it thus that you obey the laws of your country and great Vantripan the king? It pleased the king to give me the command of the army—I have obeyed him—that we have fought and conquered together I shall never forget; but the safety of the country does not depend on one



man. Under Prince Horribilis you will conquer the enemy, as you have under me. Do you want, by disobeying the king, to promote a civil war, when the foreign war is hardly over? Go back to your tents and wait the prince's orders. For myself I go."

I am sorry to report Pierrot's speech so badly. There

is a gap just here in old Alcofribas's manuscript. It is to be regretted that the rats have eaten it, so that I have scarcely been able to decipher some lines which I give you without order or sequence; but, believe me, the speech was full of profound eloquence; for at once each soldier went to his tent, giving one last cheer for farewell, and Pierrot went without hindrance, after he had handed the command over to Horribilis.

"Ah, I breathe again," cried the latter, when he had received the royal signet, which was the emblem of Pierrot's authority; "I shall no longer be perpetually under the eyes of my detested rival. Now, my brave Tristemplète, I shall cover myself with glory in my turn and pursue the enemy to his capital."

We will leave him deluding himself with these absurd hopes. Before long we shall see the sad effects of his jealousy, and the danger he led the army into by his cowardice. Now let us go back to Pierrot.

Our hero was divided between two opposing feelings—sorrow at having to leave his soldiers just when he was reaping the fruits of his victory, and joy at recovering his freedom, and being able to avenge Rosine and save her from her enemies. To tell the truth, the last feeling was so strong that he went full gallop on the road to Pekin, singing as he went, so that the passers-by thought he was half-mad. They were not far wrong: is there not always a grain of madness at the bottom of love?

We will now see what was going on at the court of the great king Vantripan. If my friends allow me, I will leave the tale for the next chapter. I am a little out of breath by following Pierrot so fast along the road and I must go and rest myself: you had better do the same.





FIFTH ADVENTURE.

PIERROT FIGHTS AGAINST BEELZEBUB AND THE
INFERNAL SPIRITS.



LD Alcofribas, at the beginning of the fifth book of Pierrot's history, says, "There is a thing which is swifter than the swallow's wing, swifter than a loco-

motive driven at full steam, swifter than the wind which

sweeps o'er the mountains and at the same moment skims along the plain, swifter than the sun's light which travels eighty millions of leagues a second,—and that it the thought of man. Pierrot galloped quicker than the steam-engine runs or the swallow flies, but his thought galloped quicker still in front of him."

By which the wise magician means that our friend was in such a hurry to arrive that he did not even stop to remark the objects which he passed on the right or left of his road. Horribilis foresaw how it would be, and it was in order to make Pierrot give up the command of the army that he had had the fair Rosine and her mother shut up in the invisible fortress guarded by infernal spirits. Pierrot, however, before searching for them, though enraged at the delay, thought it his duty to obey Vantripan's orders, to inform him of the state of affairs at the frontier, and of his last victory over the Tartars. Fendlair, as indefatigable as his master, ran as if the welfare of the world depended on his pace. At last Pierrot arrived, and presented himself, all booted and spurred, before Vantripan.

It was not a favourable time to see him, for the great king, having eaten too much melon, had got his digestion out of order, and was in a very bad humour in consequence. He made a horrible face when the grand constable was announced.

"Ah," he said; "so the rebel is here, is he? Let him come in."

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"Sire," said Pierrot, as he entered, "if your majesty will excuse my boldness, I am not a rebel."

"What else are you, you rascal? You have abused my goodness; you crept into my good graces, I made you grand constable, grand admiral, first minister; I gave you my royal seal, I delegated my royal authority to you; and now on all sides I hear complaints about you, that you oppress my subjects, throw my officers into prison; that you fly before the Tartars, that you dare not offer battle, that you dishonour my arms and the glory of my empire. And, above all, as the extreme of audacity and insolence, you have dared to revolt against your prince, and you bribed seditious soldiers to proclaim you king. Is that the conduct of a faithful subject or of a rebel? Answer me."

As he was speaking the king got excited, and grew bolder and bolder, till he almost insulted Pierrot. The courtiers, knowing the latter's pride and quick temper, began to tremble and look towards the door, expecting an angry scene. But they were mistaken, for Pierrot answered with great coolness,—

"May I inquire from whom your majesty has obtained these very authentic reports of my administration?"

"From whom?" replied Vantripan, mistaking Pierrot's coolness for fear. "From whom but the only one of my subjects sufficiently faithful, and sufficiently bold to denounce you to me, and brave your vengeance?"

"And who is this subject, so faithful and so courageous?" Pierrot again demanded.

Vantripan now saw that he had gone too far, and that Pierrot was getting excited. He would gladly have recalled his words, but, as old Alcofribas says very well—"A word once spoken, is like a swallow set at liberty; it never comes near those who let it escape." At last, with some embarrassment, the king said,—

"It was Horribilis who revealed all these abuses to me."

"Sire," said Pierrot, "Prince Horribilis may be thankful that he is of your family, and the heir to your crown. I would not have stood such calumnies quietly from any one else. Let him bring witnesses against me, and I will justify myself."

"Witnesses! witnesses!" exclaimed Vantripan, surprised. "That's all very easy to say. He has no witnesses he is willing to bring forward."

"I have," said Pierrot; and he gave an account of his administration, so clearly, precisely, and eloquently, that all the court were struck with admiration, and poor Vantripan with stupefaction. But when Pierrot ended his narrative by telling of the flight of the Tartars, which the king did not yet know of, there was general applause. The fat king got up, embraced him, and made him sit beside his chair.

"Forgive me, my poor Pierrot," he said, "for having believed all these falsehoods. You well know I have always liked you, and always shall. All who say the

contrary are liars and wretches, whom I will have either hanged or impaled, whichever you like."

"Your majesty," said Pierrot, "I thank you for the offer, but I do not accept it. I do not want to be the subject of quarrels and scandals in your court and family any longer. I resign, and trust heaven will give you servants, not more devoted to your service than I am (that would be impossible), but more fortunate."

"I forbid you to resign," cried Vantripan. "I want you: I wish you to be near me till my dying day. Is there anything you want? I'll give it you on the spot. Do you wish to marry my daughter? You asked me for her once. I give her to you, and if she made any difficulty about it before, I am sure to-day she will be the first to shake hands with you. Isn't it so, my little Bandoline?"

The princess made a sign that nothing would be more agreeable to her; but it was too late. Pierrot was proof against ambition, and cared nothing for all the princesses in the world. But he was nevertheless in a very awkward position, for he did not dare say in public that he should refuse Bandoline's hand—it would not be polite. Still less did he wish her to think that he would accept it. At last he said,—

"Sire, I am sensible of the honour your majesty wishes to do me. It is true that at other times I did desire the alliance, but since then I have perceived that it would be far above the riches and birth of one who is a subject—who is, moreover, the son of a miller——"

"Don't worry yourself about that," said Vantripan.

"If my daughter and I think you good enough as you are, need you bother about it? Come, come! give me your hand, and you, too, Bandoline, and we will have the wedding in three days."

Bandoline gave her hand. Pierrot remained motion-less.

"Your majesty," he replied, "at one time the alliance would have crowned all my wishes. To-day I no longer wish for anything. I intended, as soon as I had your majesty's permission, to resign all my offices, and to retire to a village. I wish to become a farmer. I have rustic tastes, a circumstance which ought not to surprise you. I was born a peasant and shall die one. Is a farm a suitable residence for so great a princess?"

"Pierrot," said the fat Vantripan, "you are concealing something from me; you have some reason you don't like to mention. Look here! is it pique because your offer was refused before? Bandoline shall ask you herself to marry her. After that, blood and thunder! what more can you want? isn't your pride satisfied now?"

"Pierrot," said Bandoline, blushing, "do you wish me for a wife? and if you turn farmer, would you like me to be the farmer's wife?"

"It is too late," said Pierrot, "the place is taken!"

If anyone wants to paint the acme of astonishment he should represent the appearance of the courtiers of great Vantripan, of Vantripan himself, and of poor Ban-

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doline. They could not believe their ears. There had never been, in the annals of the ninety-five dynasties which have reigned over China for the last 150,000 years, a single instance of such a refusal.

Pierrot was now in so delicate a position that he would have given a great deal to have seen the end of the conversation. Unfortunately, he did not dare leave, and



remained standing still, with his eyes downcast, with them all staring at him. A prolonged silence followed his words. At last Vantripan cried,—

"By the holy poker, Pierrot, did you come here to insult me?"

"You are mistaken, sire," Pierrot answered, with respectful firmness. "I in no way solicited the honour

your majesty has condescended to offer me, and as I could not accept, I told you so honestly."

At these words, Princess Bandoline could not restrain her tears. Shame and grief choked her.



"O heaven," she said, "to be scorned by one whom I scorned long ago!"

And she rose, and, followed by her mother, went to weep to her heart's content in her room. I must tell everything. Pierrot, conqueror of the Tartars; Pierrot,

first minister, adored by all the people (a rare thing for a minister), seemed to her quite different from Pierrot who was only a captain of the guard, and only known by his famous duel with Pantafilando.

"Why," she cried bitterly, "why did not I guess what would happen one day? Why did I scorn him?"

Her imagination became more and more excited, and she made up her mind to discover her rival, to be revenged upon her, and, if it were possible, to carry her off from Pierrot.

While she was forming these projects, so menacing to our hero's future happiness, he was trying, by making excuses, to get out of the difficulty he was in; but he could not.

"Pierrot," Vantripan said to him, "you have insulted my royal majesty, you have despised my daughter. I ought to have you hanged; but"—(this he added on the spur of the moment, seeing Pierrot's eye flash),—"I will content myself by banishing you from my presence. You are no longer either minister, or grand constable, or grand admiral; you are no more than Pierrot—simple Pierrot. Do you hear? That is to say, you are nobody—an ungrateful wretch whom I have fed with my bread, my wine—whom I have caressed and warmed in my bosom, and who now, like the venomous serpent, tries to bite his benefactor! Go!"

[&]quot;Sire-" Pierrot began.

[&]quot; Go!"

- " Sire---"
- "Go! I wish never to see you again."
- " Sire---"
- "I wish never to hear you spoken of."
- " Sire---"
- "Go! and in twenty-four hours be out of the capital, or I'll have you impaled."

"Stop, your majesty," said Pierrot, out of patience. "I regret that you dismiss me, after I have served you so long and faithfully; but if I allow you to be ungrateful, I won't allow you to insult me, or to threaten me. Remember, sire, that without me your majesty would long ago have joined your ancestors in the grave. I have too fresh a recollection of the kindnesses and confidence that you have shown me, to reply with anger to a threat you will, no doubt, be sorry for, which you regret now, I am sure; but if anyone dares to put that threat into execution, sire, I will unsheathe in my own defence the sword I have so often drawn in yours, and, with Heaven's help, none shall attack me with impunity!"

With this he left the hall, with such an intrepid air that all present were full of admiration for him, and fear of him too; everyone stood aside respectfully, and he went off to his house.

When he was gone Vantripan breathed again. Pierrot's fierce expression had frightened him more than he would confess. He tried to turn Pierrot's last words into a

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joke, and his courtiers made some attempt to persuade him he was right in ill-treating his old friend, but in his heart he felt he was wrong.

"That's what it is," he said, "to have a bad digestion. One does not know what one says, and then bites one's tongue for having said too much."

My children, though fat king Vantripan was not a very clever man, he was very right on this occasion, and whether you have a good digestion or a bad one, you will do well always to remember his advice. "Scratch too much and it smarts; talk too much and it injures," says the proverb.

When he reached his house Pierrot thought no more of his lost dignities, or of king Vantripan's anger, or of Horribilis's hate, or of the Tartars, or anyone else; he thought of nothing but of the grand expedition that he was going to undertake to deliver his beloved Rosine. He allowed a few hours for Fendlair to rest, and dismissing his pages and servants with gifts proportionate to the services of each of them, he left the place the next day. As soon as he was outside the town he felt so happy, so sure that he would deliver Rosine, and after having delivered her that he would never leave her, that he built a thousand castles in the air, the idea of which, perhaps, gave him greater pleasure than the reality would, if it came to pass.

"In spite of my disgrace, I am still rich," he thought. "I will buy a splendid farm, just like Rosine's, but

larger, because there will be more of us. I will have a nice house built, half-way up the hill, all white, with green shutters; that will make it more gay: it shall have two fronts, one east and the other west, so that we can see the sun set and rise. It shall be divided in two wings of equal size, one for the kitchen, diningroom, offices, cellars, and the fairy Aurora's room; the other——"

As he said this he was interrupted in the middle of his reverie by a light pat from a friendly hand on his shoulder. He turned round, and saw with joy the fairy Aurora.

- "Well," she said, "where are you off to this morning?"
- "I'm going to look for Rosine," he answered; and then he told the fairy about his separation from Vantripan. She began to laugh, and said,—
- "Console yourself. He won't be long before he wants your services, and he will recall you."
- "I am quite consoled," said Pierrot, "if he never recalls me."
 - "Well said. So you are going to look for Rosine?"
 - "Yes, godmother."
 - "Where?"

Pierrot scratched his head in perplexity.

"Have you set out without captain's biscuits and without a compass? Your bold confidence pleases me. But——"

" Audaces fortuna juvat," said Pierrot sententiously.

"Yes, fortune helps the bold, when they have got a grain of prudence. I dare say you fancy that I shall be your guide, and conduct you to the invisible castle, in which is imprisoned the fairest of all Rosines?"

"Assuredly," said Pierrot.

"Well then, my friend, you are mistaken; I have business in hand."

"Oh, godmother!"

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"Can't be helped. I have got business."

"Alas!" said the unhappy Pierrot; "there is nothing left for me but to die."

"Die, if you like; but will that help you much? will it set Rosine free? It will in one sense, to be sure. She will be able to marry someone else."

"Alas!" said Pierrot; "then I must be resigned and live."

"Yes, my boy; be resigned."

"Only on one condition, godmother."

"What?"

"That you conduct me at once to this invisible fortress."

"I told you I cannot. I am in a hurry."

Pierrot drew his dagger with a tragic air.

"Well, since the case is so serious," said the fairy, smiling, "open your eyes, you silly fellow, and look."

Without his knowing it, Pierrot was just before the drawbridge. The fairy Aurora, by touching him with

her wand, had given him the faculty which she herself possessed, of seeing what is invisible.

The castle which had stopped our two travellers was covered with polished steel, reflecting the sun's rays. Its architecture was fine, but gloomy, as you might suppose, since the architect was the devil him-He had forgotten self. nothing that could add to the height of the walls, the strength of the bars and bolts, and the depth of the moat, at the bottom of which an enchanted stream ran round the castle; it ran perpetually, although it was circular, and consequently had neither mouth. source or It seemed more like a



watch-dog than a river, and answered the same purpose.

It was very deep, and its waters were always hot, so that you could not even put your foot in it without being boiled at once. Above the water's surface the walls were six hundred feet high, and they were three hundred feet wide at the base. At the top there was a large parapet, which was broken at intervals by towers of double the height of the walls. Each tower was used as barracks of the army of infernal spirits, who kept guard in turns, half of them changing every twenty-four hours. These towers were sixty in number.

Other evil genii occupied the interior of the castle and were its domestics. Nowhere could you see, either outside or in, anything to charm the sight, or cheer the spirit. Opposite the castle there was a chain of bare granite hills, dark and sterile, over which the north wind howled perpetually. This range, which almost followed the outline of the castle, was semicircular, and the two spurs were only divided by a very narrow pass, which abutted on the drawbridge. The hills which composed the chain were almost perpendicular, and offered no facilities for climbing with either hands or feet.

When he saw these formidable obstacles Pierrot's heart sank within him.

- "How am I," he said, "to wrestle against these demons all alone?"
 - "Are you afraid?" asked the fairy.
- "Of not succeeding—yes," said Pierrot; "but of dying if I can deliver her—no. I only wish to live for her sake."

"Well, are you resolved to attempt it?"

"Yes, to attempt even what is impossible, godmother."

"Well, then," she said, "I hand over to you the power which the divine Solomon, my father, gave me, of seeing, hearing, and struggling against evil spirits."

With this she pronounced some magic words, whose meaning Pierrot did not understand, but whose power he soon felt. It seemed to him that he no longer touched the earth, or had anything in common with the human race. He experienced neither hunger, thirst, sleep, or fatigue. He became so like the powers of the air, that the fairy Aurora was delighted with her work.

"Go," she said to him. "Hitherto you have fought for justice. Now go and fight for your betrothed. God and thy lady.' That is the motto of the knightserrant of old."

Pierrot had no time to answer, for the fairy had disappeared.

If you ask me why Aurora, who was so powerful, so good, and kind to the unfortunate, did not herself set poor Rosine free, and why she let Pierrot run such perilous risks alone, I can only tell you, my readers, that I know nothing about it, and that apparently it ought to have been so because it was so; but I will at once give you old Alcofribas's answer to this subject.

"Away with those who have good fortune without trouble," he says. "Away with those who want ready-roasted larks to fall into their mouths! Away with such

lazy cowards, for they are ready enough to taste the transient joys of sense, but they never reach the eternal fruits of happiness, such as is the lot of noble souls. He who has not sown, shall not reap."

There you have a reason, my friends, if that satisfies you: for my part, I think it very good, and shall not seek another.

Pierrot, left alone, went two or three times round the fortifications of the castle, like a lion looking for the door of the sheep-fold, but he could find no way of scaling the wall. If he had had only to do with men, he would have tried it, and, thanks to the fairy's gift, he would have had no doubt of success; but he knew well enough that demons, who used weapons as powerful as themselves, and who kept a sharp look-out, would easily have over-powered him, owing to their superior numbers.

So he put on a cloak of sombre hue, and as full of holes as an old-clothesman's, and a pilgrim's hat, and seizing a long staff, he knocked at the castle door. At a noise he made, the porter came to the grating, and seeing Pierrot, who looked like an old man broken in years, he burst out laughing.

"Proceed on your road," he cried through the bars, "and don't come to bother us."

"Alas, my lord," said Pierrot, with a trembling voice, "give alms to a poor pilgrim. I have not many days to live."

The devil, as M. Victor Hugo observes, has vices which

are his ruin. At these words, "I have not many days to live," the porter thought there was a chance of getting one more soul into the nether regions, and that he would receive the perquisite Satan promises to those who pro-

cure him a victim. Taking a bunch of kevs from his girdle, he hastened to open the door. Pierrot, laughing under his cowl, entered slowly, as if he had hard work to drag himself along, and begged for hospitality. It happened to be Friday, and the demon, who had dined off a capital Mayence ham, and cold pie, thought it would be fun to make his guest commit a mortal sin on his entry into the castle. So he offered Pierrot a seat, and half



his dinner. Pierrot saw the trick, and smiled. He sat down on a wooden bench near the table (for if porters fare well, they are generally badly lodged, even in hell), and cut a slice of ham.

The demon eyed him with a burning and covetous

glance. He thought he had got his victim safe now; but he had more trouble with him yet.

Just as he was going to put the ham into his mouth, Pierrot pushed with his elbow the bottle of Muscat wine that was between his host and himself. It fell on the ground and smashed. The porter, alarmed, stooped down to pick up the precious pieces, and Pierrot, while he was thus busy, and could not look at him, secretly hid the slice of ham in his cloak, and replaced it by a great piece of bread, which filled his mouth, and puffed out his cheeks.

"How clumsy you are!" said the porter angrily; "all the wine is lost: it was a delicious Muscat that I stole yesterday from the butler. I have only two bottles more, and now I must go and get them out of the cellar."

"Pardon me," said Pierrot, with his mouth full, "my hand shakes with age, and I am very sorry for the sad accident."

"Wait a minute," said the porter, who never suspected the trick. "I'll go and get the wine; you go on eating."

As soon as he was gone, Pierrot, seizing the whole ham, threw it to the porter's dog, who devoured it in a twinkling. As he finished the meal, the porter returned.

"Holloa!" he said, "where's the ham?"

"Alas," said Pierrot in a mournful tone, "did not you tell me to go on eating without you?"

"Botheration, my friend; how fast you eat!"

With these words, believing Pierrot had committed the mortal sin of eating meat on a Friday, he held his stick up over him, and said:

- "Come! you follow me!"
- "Whither, my good lord?" said Pierrot, weeping.



- "Don't you know where you are?" asked the porter, with a malicious, savage look.
- "I thought, my lord, that I was among honest folk, and good Christians."
- "Ha! ha!" said the other, laughing, "you are in the devil's castle, my friend, and I am the keeper!"
 - " Alas, my good lord, what have I done?"

"You have eaten ham on a Friday: so you are my prey. Come along!" he said, seizing him by his cowl.

"Where are you going to take me?" said Pierrot.

"To the care of my sovereign master, where you will have time to repent your greediness through all eternity."

He then dragged him forcibly; but Pierrot disengaged himself and cried,—

"Ah, traitor! is this the hospitality you offer me? I know you well, scoundrel, and I defy you. I have eaten nothing but bread!"

"Fool that I am!" cried the keeper.

At the same time Pierrot took a rope, not a hempen rope, which a man could cut or break, but a divine cord, blest by the daughter of the great Solomon, and he tied the hands and feet of the porter with it, then shut him up in a kneading trough, lighted a taper, and sealed the trough with his jewelled ring, which represented the face of the king of the genii, and which cannot be broken through even by devils.

"Stop there, traitorous host," he said, "till I come to set you free myself." Then taking his prisoner's bunch of keys, he fearlessly entered the castle.

No one seemed to notice him, or asked him any questions. The devils, among their many vices and faults, do not possess that of curiosity: they who know all need not inquire about anything. Besides, they were accustomed to see their comrades in old clothes when they

returned from long expeditions. Pierrot passed for one of them. He went into the kitchen and quietly sat down in the chimney corner.

"Well, comrade, where do you come from?" said one of the cooks in a friendly tone.

"From a long walking tour, which has much amused



me: but I am cold and hungry. What meal are you preparing?"

"Don't you know? It's for Beelzebub and all his court, who dine with him to-day."

"Ah," said Pierrot, "these great lords know how to take care of themselves. What's cooking in the pot?"

"It's a fat banker," said the cook contemptuously.

"He is fat and plump," said Pierrot, lifting up the lid, at which a pleasant smell of boiled beef rose throughout the kitchen.

"Alas, alas," said the poor banker, "after having dined so often, for so long a time at once, and so well myself, I am now, in my turn, making food for these rascals."

"Who are you calling rascals?" said the cook angrily.

"You and yours," answered the banker.

The cook seized a great fork and plunged it into the pot as if to see if the beef were boiled enough.

"Wretched man that I am," cried the banker, "he has run me through."

"Come, comrade," said Pierrot, who was seized with compassion, "let the poor man alone, and don't torment him uselessly."

"Have you pity for him then?" said the scullion, astounded. "Are you a false brother?"

"I a false brother?" Pierrot answered indignantly, "you little know me." Then he added, to change the conversation, "I see the beef, but where are the *entrées?*"

"The entrées are exquisite," said the cook, "and will make all the court lick their fingers up to the elbow! That, the right side of the table, is a little fricasseed marchioness, as tender as a morning rose, and I am going to dress her with a sauce of which you can form no idea, my poor friend; for you seem to me not to have been accustomed to good society or to good cooking."

"Alas, no," said Pierrot, "but it will come. You are very fortunate in approaching such great people and having their confidence—for are you not in high favour, being such a skilful cook?"

"I?" said the other with a careless air, "I don't care

that for them;" and he snapped his fingers. "When one sees Beelzebub every day, like I do, one gets tired of the honour, my friend, one gets tired of it."

And turning round, he put his hands into his pockets, and took a few steps, lifting up his foot as high as his nose.

Pierrot pretended to be astounded. He put some more questions to the cook, to



which he replied in a patronizing tone.

"And do you really see Beelzebub every morning?" he continued.

"Every day, my dear fellow. It is I that take him his cup of coffee in the morning."

"Does he often talk to you?"

- "Every day."
- "But what does he say?"
- "He says, 'Get out of that, you idiot.'"
- "Oh! oh!" said Pierrot, "it's not worth the trouble of seeing him so close if you only obtain such marks of favour as that."
- "All the same, my friend—it is always something to go near him. A king's crumbs are worth more than a poor devil's roast."
- "Talking of roast," said Pierrot, "what's that that hangs cooking before the fire?"
- "Ah, by jingo," said the cook, "that's the Grand Turk—don't you recognize him? He was brought here yesterday, all bleeding, from the market. He had just been stabbed by his brother."
- "Mahomet! Mahomet!" cried the roasted man, piteously.

"Go see if they're coming, John, Go see if they're coming,"

sang the cook in a shrill voice.

The conversation went on. While Pierrot was warming himself the scullion continued his work, preparing fritters of young girls, larding a fillet of a notary, and a fricandeau of a grocer, who had sold sugar with short weight, and given ochre for coffee. Our friend wheedled himself into the cook's confidence, thinking he might get some valuable hints from him.

At last the cook told him that Rosine and her mother

were shut up in a tower at the corner of the castle, and that their food was carried to them there every day.

- "But they don't touch anything," he said, "and seem very sad—either someone has taken away their appetite, or someone brings them food secretly by a road in the air; for they have been confined several months now, and are still alive."
 - "Who takes them their food?" asked Pierrot.
- "Who should it be if not I?" said the cook with temper; "doesn't all the drudgery fall on me? It's a dog's life. While the great lords feast up above, I'm obliged to lick the saucepans."
 - "I pity you," said Pierrot.
- "That would be nothing," replied the other, "but just think of this, my friend, that, for some unknown reason, we are encumbered with these two minxes upstairs, who sulk at me from morning till night, and I am not allowed to ill-treat them like the others. It's forbidden by order."
- "Really?" said Pierrot, who saw in this the signs of the fairy Aurora's care.
- "It's a shame," said the cook, "to see the bother given by these jades."

At this word Pierrot could contain himself no longer, and let the red-hot tongs fall on the cook's foot. The poor devil's hoof was burnt, and his hair singed.

"You scoundrel," said the scullion, "to think I treated you as a friend!" At the same time seizing a spit, he threw himself on to Pierrot; but the latter being more

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nimble, seized a saucepan of boiling water, and put it over his head. The cook uttered such fearful cries that his companions ran up, but as devils have no pity, they shouted with laughter to see his head caught in the saucepan, which Pierrot held tight while he avoided



the blows from the spit. At last Pierrot, having disarmed him, took the saucepan off, but the cook in a fury drew his large, sharp kitchen knife and tried to plunge it into his enemy's stomach. Seeing this, Pierrot seized a red-hot poker, and put it to the wretched demon's ears, which were long and hairy, like those of all his brothers. This was fire after water. The devil

threw his knife at Pierrot, but he avoided it, and the knife entered the stomach of the steward, who was looking on and laughing. He now occupied himself in trying to hold his entrails in with both hands, for they were protruding. Then the combat became terrible. The cook, more savage than ever, seized a marble pestle which he used to crush peas with, and with his

head down he ran at Pierrot again. Our hero avoided him with great coolness, and the pestle and its bearer went against the head cook's chest and he fell backwards senseless. Little by little the fight became general, and blows fell so thick and fast on everybody that there was no knowing whom they were hitting, friends or enemies.



Meanwhile, Pierrot, the author of all this uproar, had seized with both hands the circular block of a tree on which they chopped up the condemned, and spinning it round his head, with every blow he knocked a devil over. Little by little they withdrew from him, and tried to continue the fight from a distance. Pierrot, taking

advantage of this, reached the door, and taking from the hands of the cook, who was stunned, the keys of the tower and of Rosine's room, he ran thither without troubling whether they pursued him or not.

As soon as he was gone, all was explained. They asked who was the stranger, the intruder, who had caused so much disorder. The devil who commanded the guard-room in the nearest tower sought for informa-



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tion and ran to the porter's lodge, and the porter, from histrough where he was shut in and held by the seal of Solomon till the end of time, told his tale piteously. They then rushed after Pierrot, and arrived just as he had locked the door of the tower after him and taken out the key and

was going up to the room used by Rosine and her mother. The devils tried to force the door, but in vain. It was made of metal chosen by Satan himself, and whose strength was as superior to that of the diamond as the diamond is to that of glass. They might have picked the lock, but the infernal spirits who kept guard were inferior devils, little versed in science, and who knew nothing of the magic by which it was closed. They then had to go and meet Beelzebub, who, before dining

with the grand company, had been out hunting to get an appetite. This was the news that greeted him on his arrival.

"Good," he said, pulling his beard with an air of satisfaction; "the enemy is here, and he won't get out again. I've got him at last, this famous Pierrot who braves me, this protégé of the fairy Aurora, my deadly enemy. Leave



him alone till to-morrow," he added, "only keep close guard: if he escapes you shall each of you have two hundred lashes. Leave business till to-morrow: to-night let us dine in peace."

In two seconds Pierrot had climbed the two hundred steps, at the top of which he found a dark corridor which led to the room of the two prisoners. He knocked hurriedly at the door. They, thinking it was one of their gaolers, embraced each other, trembling.

"It is I, Pierrot! your friend, Pierrot!"

At his well-known voice, they ran to the door, and in the first transport of joy (I must tell all), they embraced him tenderly like an old friend; but this joy soon turned to grief.

"How sad," said the mother, "to find you a prisoner here. We could only count on you and on the fairy Aurora."

"I a prisoner?" said Pierrot. "Ah, if I were, madam, and were near you, how pleasant the prison would be." He spoke to the mother, but his eyes were turned to Rosine, who dropped hers and blushed. "But I am not; I came here of my own accord to deliver you."

He then told them of the trick by which he had gained entrance there, and recounted his campaign against the Tartars. It was a long story, mixed up with protestations of friendship, devotion, and fidelity proof against anything. He showed Rosine the jewelled ring he wore, and told her under what circumstances the fairy had given it to him. In fine, I know not if he were eloquent, nor where he learnt all that he said, but his discourse lasted from three in the afternoon till three in the morning, and after twelve hours of conversation, he was not tired of talking nor his hearers of listening.

When three o'clock struck, the mother made Pierrot a sign to retire, and the poor man had to leave and go

up to the next floor. But he could not sleep, so he got up and went to the top of the tower and gazed at the stars.

The whole vault of heaven was covered with them and Pierrot fell into a profound meditation. At bottom, in spite of his invincible courage, he was by no means assured of the success of his expedition.



"I am in the wolf's mouth," he thought, "and I must try to get out of it."

As he was thinking over the state of affairs, he saw opposite to him one of the infernal spirits, who were sentinels on the outside wall of the castle. This demon, who was of gigantic size, looked at him with a mocking air. He said,—

"Pierrot is a knight; Pierrot protects persecuted



ladies; Pierrot is captured; Pierrot will be hanged!"

"Perhaps," said Pierrot, "but he will first cut off your ears!"

"Myears! myears!" said the demon, in a fury.

Hequickly balanced his lance, which was more than three hundred feet long, and tried to run Pierrot through; but the latter, who was on his guard, seized the handle of his lance near the head and sharply drew it to him. There was no parapet on the inside of the castle wall, and the poor devil followed his lance one-half its way in spite of himself, and then let go his hold,

the result was he fell on to the pavement of the court and broke his back. Hearing his dreadful cries, his comrades came up, put him on a stretcher, and took him to the hospital.

Here, perhaps, you will inquire how it happens that devils, who are simple spirits, could receive or give sword cuts or lance thrusts. I assure my readers that this question troubled me much, and for a long time, till old Alcofribas, who is a mine of learning, gave me the following explanation, which he himself received from the venerable Milton:—

"The blows demons receive are never mortal, because demons never die; but they bring on all the effects of ordinary death: their wounds must be dressed, and they must be nursed; they are put hors de combat and can no longer injure their enemies."

Pierrot remained on the tower top, till the paling sky showed dawn was approaching. He said his prayers, commended himself to the fairy Aurora, and tranquilly waited, without impatience or fear, for the attack he expected. Rosine and her mother, for their part, had not been able to sleep. As soon as the sun rose they came to bid him adieu. It was a sad scene, and I hope my readers will never see the like. Pierrot at last compelled them to go down again; he feared that the agitation of the combat he was expecting would be too much for them.

Towards eight o'clock, Beelzebub got up, still tired

with the orgy of the previous evening, for he had been drinking nearly all night with his officers. He buckled on his scimitar, put on all his armour, and gave the signal for the attack.



The devils met in the inner court of the castle all under arms. The advance guard was armed with pick-axes, and crowbars, and hatchets, to force the door open. At a sign from Beelzebub, six of the bravest advanced

and beat on the door with heavy blows. Beelzebub had uttered the magic words which kept it on its hinges. It split into pieces, and the besiegers saw Pierrot behind it among the ruins, armed with a huge iron club that he had found left in the tower. One of them advanced resolutely, but Pierrot brought down his club and smashed him with one blow. The stroke was so violent that the wretched demon was flattened; his head driven into his neck, his neck into his chest, and his chest into his stomach.

When they saw this, the most resolute hung back. A second was ready to take the place of the first, but by a back stroke Pierrot crushed his head against the wall. At that moment he was filled with the divine force which the archangel Michael used against Satan. With one foot before the threshold, Pierrot stood on the first step of the tower stairs, looking haughty, his eyes gleaming with courage and anger, his nostrils dilated and quivering, so that he frightened the bravest.

"What," said Beelzebub, "can a single man stop us?" and he made a step towards Pierrot.

"Oh, godmother," cried Pierrot, "come and see me conquer or die."

With these words, he dealt Beelzebub such a blow that if his head had not been protected by a helmet that nothing could break, he would have been ground to powder; and as it was, in spite of the helmet, he rolled into the dust, stunned. The soldiers drew back, frightened.

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Fair Rosine, who saw the conflict from the window, clapped her hands and applauded Pierrot's courage. He, in a transport of joy and pride, stepped outside the tower, overturned a dozen demons, stooped down over Beelzebub, drew his scimitar, and was going to cut off his head.

At the same instant Beelzebub came to himself; he doubled up into himself as it were, and rolling like a ball, escaped Pierrot's blow.

The enemy took to flight, and Pierrot returned thanks to Heaven, reclosed the tower door, sealed it with the magic ring of Solomon, and, henceforth at ease about the attack from that side, reascended to the summit of the tower. But the danger was in no way over, it had only changed its form.

Old Alcofribas at this point remarks very well:—
"What are our combats between man and man in comparison with this sublime struggle between a single man and demons! With us a hundred thousand men march out, with bands playing and banners flying, against another hundred thousand. They fight for some hours, and whatever side has the victory, the conqueror has the wounds dressed, and the prisoners treated with humanity—man engages with man. But the unhappy Pierrot found himself alone and abandoned while all hell united against him. If he fell into the hands of his enemies he knew what tortures he might expect; nothing could appease Beelzebub, the eternal enemy of

our race. This Pierrot knew, but he did not tremble or recoil—though earth or hell together were to league against him he would meet them both. His courage kept pace with the danger; he felt neither the fear nor the fatigue that other men feel. 'He who protects the right,' he thought, 'is invincible.' Thus armed with a good conscience he went into the battle. Whoever was the enemy, he was sure to conquer."

Let my readers, I beg, lay this to heart. Whoever is your enemy, if your cause is just, go forward and strike: victory is yours.

Perhaps you think Pierrot was anxious or unhappy about his unequal struggle against all the powers of hell. You are wrong; he felt himself to be the happiest of men. He rejoiced with the greatest joy to think he was risking his life for those he loved best in the world. To spill his blood for Rosine, and under her very eyes, was a happiness higher than he had ever dreamed of. Happy is he who dies for those he loves: his soul then partakes of the divine principle. Still happier is he whom love inspires to noble deeds.

The fight at the entrance of the tower had not occupied more than ten minutes. It was more a skirmish than a decisive battle. Pierrot knew this well, and without waiting to receive the congratulations of Rosine and her mother, he silently waited, with crossed arms, for the next attack.

The devils went and fetched ladders, which they placed

against the tower wall, and began to climb up them. In this case there was more to be done than to pitch the assailants into the moat, as Pierrot had done with the Tartars, because the ladders, which Beelzebub had endowed with magic power, adhered to the wall, so that they could not be knocked down. Hitherto the devils had fought with Pierrot with equal weapons, and the power the fairy Aurora had given her godson sheltered him from all their enchantments. Without this precaution, poor Pierrot, in spite of his courage and presence of mind, would have been a prey to the infernal spirits as soon as he set foot within the castle. Still, though the demons had only the advantage of numbers, and not that of magic power superior to all human kind, Pierrot, when he saw them climbing the ladders, was seized with keen despair.

"Great heaven," he cried, "if it be thy wish, let me perish, but save Rosine and her mother."

All of a sudden he recognized the sweet perfume which the fairy Aurora always spread around her. "Is it thus you lose courage?" she said to him. "Strike, I am with you." At these words Astaroth, Beelzebub's lieutenant, appeared above the wall. He uttered a long cry of joy and triumph.

"Courage, my friends, Pierrot is ours."

As he finished speaking, and raised himself over the parapet, Pierrot gave him a blow on the chest with his club, that hurled him into the court. His skull was broken, and his death made his comrades waver for some time. Our hero took advantage of this indecision, and struck at the most advanced of his enemies without intermission. His blows fell on their heads like hail on a roof, and each had his brains knocked out, or an arm or leg smashed.



During all this slaughter, poor Rosine poured out her fervent prayers to Heaven. Her heart throbbed with fear and with joy at each stroke dealt by Pierrot the invincible. How great a man he was, to fight even with hell itself for her sake!

At last the demons left off sending Pierrot any more victims to smash.

"Friends," said Beelzebub, "don't let us waste any more time with useless efforts. We have not yet em-

ployed all our weapons. The most terrible of them remains. Let us burn Pierrot in the tower!"

At once all the devils set to work to fetch wood and fagots, and set them alight. The flames mounted up, surrounded the whole tower, and reached the summit. This time all was over. Pierrot's courage could not be of any service to him.

I trust my readers will forgive me for leaving him in such imminent peril, but I must now tell you what happened to the Chinese army when under the command of prince Horribilis. My heart bleeds to leave Pierrot in danger of death, but Alcofribas wishes me to tell of the Chinese and Tartars, and I am obliged to obey.





SIXTH ADVENTURE.

HORRIBILIS FINDS THAT THERE ARE GREAT GENERALS WHO ARE NOT PRINCES, AND PRINCES WHO ARE NOT GREAT GENERALS.

END OF PIERROT'S HISTORY.



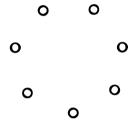
YOU have no doubt heard of the renowned town of Kraktaktah. At any rate, if you do not know it, you will look for it in the map of the Unknown Isles which old Alcofribas had published to serve as a guide to Pierrot's history. It is the most beauti-

ful and the most celebrated city in all Asia. It is formed

End of Pierrot's History.

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of seven concentrical and perfectly circular inclosures, of which I give a plan—



In the centre was the palace of Kabardantes, the emperor of the Unknown Isles, of which Kraktaktah is the capital. Round the palace were placed a succession of stables, where the Tartar horses were housed during the night. Over each stable there was a room, in which the whole family of the owner of the horse lived as best they could, and slept on straw. My readers will understand that the furniture was appropriate to the lodging. This furniture consisted of a truss of straw for each member of the family, and of a large saucepan, in which they made the family soup, and from which they ate it with their fingers. "Spoons and forks," old Alcofribas says, "are all very well for delicate and idle people, but a man wants nothing to help himself with besides his fingers; when he has done dinner, he wipes them on his beard: if he has none, on that of his neighbour. Thus each one carries his own napkin with him, and there is no need of much linen, or of all the packages people travel with now-a-days." Whether Alcofribas was right in following such a custom, or whether he only said it to condemn the luxury of his time, does not matter much.

The description of the capital of the Unknown Isles is not a digression such as you often see in the works of

people who desire to please their readers without instructing them. That, my friends, is not Alcofribas' character. He was an old magician. very learned, very austere, and who cared more for truth than for all men put to-"Men," he gether. used to say, "pass away at the end of forty years, and are either celebrated or forgotten; but truth lives on; it is immortal, like the deity."



Following this principle, he never said anything but that which would lead to the discovery of truth; everything else to him was of no moment.

One morning, as the citizens of Kraktaktah, after having breakfasted, groomed their horses, and talked together of the war and public affairs, they heard a great noise on the plain, and the sentinel who watched the palace of Kabardantes, which overlooked the country, cried out, "Here are our men returning." At the same time they recognized the galloping of the horses, and all ran to the ramparts.

The citizens were a little surprised to see them coming back in such a hurry. When they looked out for them, expecting them to return with enormous booty, China being the richest and most fertile country in the world, they remarked that they were coming, not only alone, but, still worse, that they had lost their baggage; and then they understood the sad truth. Finally, when each soldier went to his own quarters, they saw with horror that three parts of the army did not answer the roll call. and that those who survived were in a very bad state. Immediately there arose among the women, who were expecting their husbands and sons, such a concert of lamentations and crying, that one could not bear to hear them. Kabardantes, mad at this uproar and furious at his own defeat, declared he would at once cut off the heads of anyone who did not hold their tongues. When they heard this wise order, the women became as dumb as fishes.

Meanwhile the Chinese army approached under Horribilis. He, convinced that pursuit was without danger, came to encamp under the walls of Kraktaktah. The country was deserted; the crops, the cattle and horses, and everything which contributed towards subsistence, were shut up within the city walls. Horribilis, persuaded

that his name had spread terror everywhere, sent to bid the place surrender.

At this insolent demand Kabardantes seized the Chinese envoy by the ears, lifted him from the ground, and holding him in his hands, said to him, without letting him loose,—

- "Go and tell your master that I challenge him to single combat!"
- "I'm going," said the Chinese, trying to disengage himself and get down to the ground again.
- "Wait a bit; you seem in a hurry. In what words will you tell him my message?"
- "My lord, in Heaven's name, let me go, and I will satisfy you."
- "No, no. Tell me first how you will deliver my challenge."
 - "My lord, I beg you-"
- "Will you still talk, you blockhead? Do you think the great Kabardantes expresses himself like any cockney you may meet with?"
 - "My lord, I don't think so; but-"
- "Consider that I had a good education at the school of Kraktaktah."
 - "My lord, I can well believe it, but---"
- "And that I had for my tutor Lord Poukpikpoff, who was in no way inferior to Aristotle himself,"
 - "My lord---"
 - "Either in letters,"
 - "My lord-"

- "Or in science."
- "My lord-"
- "Or in natural history,"
- "My lord--"
- "Or in physics, botany, dialectics, or hyperphysics;"
- "Your majesty-"
- "And that I profited by his instructions."
- "Great emperor—"
- "Well, come then. Repeat the challenge to me, that I may know how you will deliver it."
- "Great emperor," said the Chinese, turning blue with rage and pain, "this is not a fit time. Be kind enough to replace me on the ground."
- "Really," said Kabardantes, "your ears stick more to my hands than your head."

At these words, the Chinese fell heavily to the ground; but his ears remained in Kabardantes' hands. He picked himself up half dead and tried to fly, but the Tartar held him back.

- "Rehearse it to me," he said.
- "My lord," said the trembling Chinese, "I am going to, but let me get a little water to bathe my wound."
- "Very well, my friend, for you are all bleeding:" and he told the attendant to go and fetch some vinegar, with which they spunged the Chinese's ears, or rather the place where they ought to have been. The wretched man uttered fearful cries, but he was compelled to submit to the operation.

- "Now," said Kabardantes, "have you got your wits about you, and are you in possession of your faculties?"
- "Certainly, my lord," cried the Chinese, dreading some fresh mystification.
- "Well then, say after me, 'Thou dog, Pierrot!' What are you staring at me like an idiot for?"
- "Your majesty," said the Chinese, "Pierrot is no longer with the army."
 - "Isn't he really?"
 - "No, your majesty!"
 - " How long is it since he left?"
- "Since the day of your majesty's ——" Here the Chinese hesitated and appeared to look for a word.
 - "The day of my flight?"
- "No, my lord, since the day of your sudden concentration on the borders of Kraktaktah."
 - "Is he dead, then?"
 - "No, he has been dismissed."
 - "Pierrot dismissed! Who succeeds him?"
 - "Prince Horribilis, my lord."
- "Bravo!" said Kabardantes. "I don't want you any more now; go, be off, run, fly!" And turning to the chief officers, he said,—
- "Friends, to horse! Pierrot is gone. The battle will be ours."

An hour afterwards the whole Tartar army left the walls of Kraktaktah and advanced to the camp of the Chinese. The latter did not expect them in the least:

most of them were at dinner, some were foraging, or burning the Tartar villages in the country. At the first cry of the sentinels and advanced guard, all rushed to arms, and saw to their horror the terrible Kabardantes coming up at a gallop.

The Chinese did not hesitate, but at once took the road to the Great Wall. The hungry among them did not even waste time by carrying away provisions for the road; as for the rest they were soon off.

Fancy, my friends, eight hundred thousand Chinese running over the plain, all in the same direction. The cavalry formed, of course, the advance guard; at their head galloped, or rather flew, the Prince Horribilis. His horse's feet scarcely touched the ground, while he cursed his evil star, and the insane idea that made him come to the war, and get Pierrot dismissed. From time to time he thought of Kabardantes.

"What a furious Tartar!" he thought, "it is three days since we pursued him: he returned home; and now instead of embracing his wife and children as a good husband and father would, he remounts and pursues us. Is it common sense? Is it logic? If he wanted to enter China, why did he fly to Kraktaktah: if he wanted to re-enter Kraktaktah, what is he galloping to China for now?"

While he was making these wise reflections and many others which I pass by in silence, because they in no way profited him, or made him in any way more prudent or

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skilful or brave, or better, or more disposed to recognize merit in others, he kept on spurring his horse. At a sufficient distance behind him ran all the staff, followed by the crowd of martyrs. The Tartar lances goaded the flock of fugitives, and gave them wings. At last the sun set, and the wretched Chinese, protected by the shades of night, were able to take a little rest.

The first day of the flight, more than a hundred thousand Chinese perished, or were taken prisoners. The next day the pursuit continued. One hundred and fifty thousand Chinese were still on the road. The third day the remains of the army reached the Great Wall, and hid behind the ramparts Pierrot had defended. Kabardantes, flushed with success, wanted to scale the wall at once, but most of the Tartars, knocked up by such continual pursuing, refused to follow him, and the attack was deferred till the morrow.

There is a proverb which says, "Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day." Never was proverb more applicable than this on the present occasion. Horribilis, in despair, had a search made everywhere for Pierrot, in order to again give him the command,—in great danger courageous spirits naturally take the lead. Jealousy and hate had given way to fear; poor Horribilis saw no safety except in Pierrot.

"Where is he?" he said to Tristemplète, "tell me, as you are a magician."

"I need be no magician to guess where," said Trist-

emplète with an awful smile. "When he left your father's court he went to deliver his betrothed."

"Very well, send an express at once to recall him, and tell him, I replace everything at once in his hands; and that if he does not come at once I am lost, the army is lost, all China is lost!"



Immediately the magician whistled, towards the north, south, east, and west, and four infernal spirits answered the signal at once.

"Transport me forthwith to King Vantripan's court," said Tristemplète.

In a second he was at the foot of the grand staircase. As he entered the saloon, he saw Vantripan sitting on his throne, with his crown on his head, and his eyes

sparkling with good humour and pride. He was giving audience to the envoys of the Shah of Persia.

"Yes, gentlemen," he was saying, drawing himself up proudly, "the terror of my name and the valour of Prince



Horribilis have put all the Tartars to flight. My son writes that he is marching on their capital, Kraktaktah, and that he will only make one mouthful of it!"

"Your majesty," said the Shah's envoy, "we congratulate you on this success, and on the exploits of the Prince Horribilis. He seems to have been gallantly seconded by all his officers, and especially by the grand constable."

"Who! Pierrot?" interrupted the king disdainfully. "You saw that in the papers. Those papers, you know, are a tissue of lies. To make mistakes, tell falsehoods, to report false news instead of true: that's their line. It's on that they live. Horribilis seconded by Pierrot! Ha! ha! ha!"

And he sat down in his chair shricking with laughter.

"Your majesty," said the chief usher, "here is a courier from Prince Horribilis."

"Let him come in. Wait, gentlemen," he added; "I am not at all anxious, because I had news from him yesterday. Pierrot left the army six days ago. So it is not to him that we can attribute the news that I am about to receive."

Tristemplète advanced with a modest air.

- "Well!" said Vantripan. "Where are your dispatches?"
- "Sire, I am ordered by Prince Horribilis to speak with you alone."
- "To me alone? Why such mystery? Speak out before every body. There is no one of any account here."
- "Sire," said Tristemplète, "since you wish it, I will speak. After the grand constable's departure, Prince Horribilis pursued the enemy up to the gates of Kraktaktah——"
- "Just as I told you, gentlemen," interrupted fat Vantripan.
 - "Suddenly," Tristemplete continued, "Kabardantes

and his soldiers turned round and rushed on us with fury, after they heard of the grand constable's departure."

"Confound it!" said Vantripan thoughtfully. "You thrashed them, I suppose?"

"Sire, that is what must have happened, if Prince Horribilis's order had been better understood, and better executed."

"What order?"

"When he saw Kabardantes and the Tartars advancing on us at a gallop, the prince cried, 'Forward!' Unfortunately, for some unknown reason, he had his face turned towards China as he spoke, and the men thought he meant, 'Forward, retreat to China!' Everybody hastened thither, and the prince, carried along, or hurried by the crowd, was the first to reach the Great Wall, where he awaits your sovereign commands."

"My sovereign commands," said fat Vantripan, "are that he goes and hangs himself. How many men has he lost?"

"Sire, a hundred thousand the first day, a hundred and fifty thousand the second, and two hundred thousand the third."

"Altogether four hundred and fifty thousand men! A nice three days' work! What activity! It was well worth while to dismiss Pierrot for this! We must sing the old song—

'Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Are simple week-days three.

On Tuesday the army met, On Wednesday off we set, On Thursday beaten were we.'

Good heavens, what am I to do? Cursed Horribilis! What business had he to go after the Tartars?"

- "Your majesty, he could not foresee that this would happen."
 - "Horribilis is a fool!"
 - "Sire, respect does not allow me to contradict you."
- "What's the use of talking about respect? Give me advice! All you here, who are standing with your mouths open, like fish out of water, give me advice!"
- "Sire, that is easy," said one courtier. "Put yourself at the head of the army. Your presence will electrify the Chinese, and——"
 - "Go and electrify yourself," interrupted the king.
- "Sire," said another, "take a general census of all the population able to bear arms."
- "Yes! and while we are taking the census, we shall be out of the frying-pan into the fire. Ass! get along with you!"
- "Sire," said a third, "have snares set on all the roads, to catch the Tartar cavalry."
- "Very fine! and they will go across country, and our horses will be caught in the snares, you blockhead!"
- "Your majesty," said a fourth, "how would it do to have wolf-traps, instead of snares?"
 - "You simple idiot!" said the king.

"Sire," said a fourth, "how would it be to poison the springs?"

"What should we drink, then?" asked Vantripan. "It would be shorter work to cut their heads off at once."

Each proposed some plan of his own. At last Vantripan said,—

- "You are all donkeys! And you," he added, addressing Tristemplète, "what do you propose?"
 - "Sire, recall Pierrot."
- "Ah, you are a true friend and a sensible man," said Vantripan; "but where is Pierrot?"
 - "Sire, he is gone."
 - "A fresh misfortune! The deuce take all of you!"
- "Sire," said Tristemplète modestly, "if your majesty likes to give me full powers, I will soon bring him back."
 - "Take them," said the king.

The next morning Tristemplète arrived at Beelzebub's castle, just in the nick of time for our poor friend, for the flames were surrounding him and his betrothed on all sides.

Poor Rosine and her mother thought their last hour had come, and commended their souls to God. Pierrot himself, though untouched by fear, despaired of saving them, and wished to die with them. The demons shouted and cheered, and heaped up the fire with all sorts of inflammable materials kept in the infernal storehouses. Meanwhile Tristemplète entered the court.

"Where is Beelzebub?" he said, dismounting from his horse.

"Here I am," said Beelzebub, still all bruises from his fall. "Who wants me?" Then, when he saw Tristemplète, he ran to embrace him.

"Ah, good day, my friend! How long it is since I have seen you," he said.

"Yes, my business-"



"Quite so, quite so! I know your business. When are you coming to live with us for good?"

"I shall put it off as long as possible," said Tristemplète, making a grimace.

"You are fastidious?" asked Beelzebub. "Really you are wrong. Hell is not at all the place you imagine. There are some very good devils among us, and we live a jolly life. When would you like me to come and fetch you?"

"We will talk of that presently," said Tristemplète.
"I came here on an important matter. Where is Pierrot?"

"Look, he is about to be fried. You see how we have carried out your orders."

"Unfortunate!" cried Tristemplète. "Quench the fire directly."

"Hah! Why?"

"Quench the fire, I say. The explanation will make it too late."

"I shan't," said Beelzebub proudly. "He has thrashed me, he has killed and wounded more than sixty of my soldiers. I only owe my life to my steel helmet, whose temper is superior to any other known. He shall die."

"He shall live," said Tristemplète.

"He shall die!"

"He shall live!"

"He shall die!"

With these words the two friends fell on each other.

"In the name of Eblis, king of the infernal spirits, and rival of Solomon; in the name of the power you will have over me after my death; in the name of the magic ring, which can light in your bones the fire of eternal destruction, obey, Beelzebub, and quench the flames!"

Beelzebub, conquered, blew out the flames, growling, and drew on one side, like a dog when anyone tries to take a bone away from him.

"And thou," cried Tristemplète to Pierrot, "come down, and fear nothing."

"Can I trust him?" Pierrot asked of the fairy Aurora.

"Yes," she said; "he needs you."

"I shall not come down alone," said Pierrot. "I shall bring away with me my betrothed and her mother."

"Bring them, if you like," said Tristemplète.

Pierrot came down with a triumphant air, leading them by the hand; but he made them go out of the castle before him, lest by any fresh treachery they should be shut in. He passed through the files of demons, with head erect, and with a fixed and determined gaze. His enemies, drawn up in two ranks, could not help admiring his courage. Rosine said to herself, "How happy I am, to be loved by such a man;" and the fairy Aurora, who brought up the rear of the procession, smiled as she said to Beelzebub, pointing to her godson,—

"You could neither conquer him nor frighten him."

Poor Beelzebub gnashed his teeth when he saw his prey slipping from his grasp. A stronger power than his had compelled him to obey; for you know, my friends, that if the devil can tempt men, and lead them to destruction, man for his part, by a divine privilege, is able to conquer and subdue the devil. This was the entire work of the magicians of old; the science now-adays is forgotten, or at least neglected, because it would be dangerous to the public weal and the stability of the state; but it is a true science, and is still cultivated by

some unknown sages. Some day, perhaps, I shall be allowed to reveal the secrets to you, but for the present let us draw the curtain over them. Such mysteries were not made to be listened to by all ears, or repeated by all mouths. Suffice it to say, that the science stretches, and pushes its roots into the bowels of the earth, and there



is no tree, bird, rock, reptile, or star that does not converse with the spirit of philosophy, and which does not reveal the secrets of nature to it.

As soon as Pierrot and his companions had left the devil's castle, his first care was to inquire of Tristemplete, who had followed them, whither he was going to take them.

"To the king's court," said Tristemplète; and he proceeded to tell him what my readers already know, and also that the king had need of his services.

"It's all the same to me," said Pierrot. "I have something better to do than to be knocked about for an ungrateful king and his rascally son. Horribilis wanted to take my place—let him keep it; and if he is likely to perish, let him; it will only be one wicked man the less."

"Pierrot," said the fairy, "haven't you another reason?"

"My true reason," said Pierrot, embarrassed, "is that I don't want to be separated from Rosine any longer. I have suffered too much from our separation and from her danger. Henceforth I wish everything to be in common between us."

"Well, that's a reasonable reason," said the fairy; but be sure that I will take charge of her and her mother; and do you go where honour calls you."

"But-" said Pierrot.

"Go, my friend," said Rosine, looking at him tenderly, "you must save your country now; later on we will hope to be happy."

"Since I must go, then, let's go at once," said poor Pierrot, with a sigh; and taking leave of his betrothed he went off with the magician. In a few seconds he was before Vantripan.

The poor king was very sad and miserable. His daughter was despised, his son disgraced by his cowardice,

his army cut in pieces, and his kingdom invaded; all this had taken away his appetite. When Pierrot appeared he was filled with joy and tenderness, and threw his arms around his neck, weeping. Pierrot, who had a



soft heart, was so touched with this reception that he felt inclined to cry himself. All the courtiers, seeing the king weeping, set to work to sob tremendously. The queen put her handkerchief to her eyes, and poor Bando-

line, much cut up at Pierrot's scorn, eagerly seized such a good opportunity for bursting into tears.

"Ah, my poor friend," said Vantripan, at last, crying like a calf that has lost its mother, "how glad I am to see you back. When you weren't here everything went wrong, and you know what has happened."

"Yes, I know," said Pierrot.

"Alas, it's my fault!" said Vantripan. "Why should I have given the command to a fool who pursues the enemy when the enemy is safe, and who saves himself when the enemy pursues him. But at last here you are, and all is well. You will go and resume the command; you will put the Tartars to flight, cut off Kabardantes' head, conquer Kraktaktah, and the empire of the Unknown Isles, and—"

"Is there anything else to be done?" asked Pierrot, smiling at the confidence Vantripan had in his ability.

"No; that's all for the present."

"Then I'll go," said Pierrot, taking his leave.

As he crossed the corridor to go out, a maid of Princess Bandoline's touched his arm, and made him a sign to follow her.

This message embarrassed Pierrot very much. He no longer loved the princess, and, as usual in such cases, hardly remembered he ever had loved her; but he had too much politeness and delicacy to tell her so to her face. He would not have said so to a simple peasant girl, still less to a great princess, whose chief faults were

that she was vain (a pardonable thing in a king's daughter), and that she did not please Pierrot. So he followed the maid reluctantly, and reached Bandoline's apartment.

She was waiting for him, reclining on a sofa, and made him a sign to sit down beside her. He hesitated a little, being in a hurry to go, and escape a disagreeable task.

"Sit down," she said sadly. "What I have got to say will not detain you long."

He obeyed. She resumed,—

- "Pierrot, why don't you love me any more? Am I less handsome than I was?"
- "You are always the queen of beauty," Pierrot answered, turning away his eyes.
 - "Have I done you any harm?"
 - "None," said Pierrot.
 - "Is it because I am a king's daughter?"
 - " No."
 - "Is it because I once refused to marry you?

Poor Pierrot was in torture. He replied,—

"People love as they can, not as they are wanted to."

A great and sad truth! Poor Bandoline got red and then white. At last she got up, and said,—

- "You love another woman?"
- "Yes," said Pierrot, less embarrassed at this avowal than at all the rest of the conversation.
 - "She is very happy," said Bandoline, with a sigh.

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"Let her be so," she added, "since fate ordains it. And you, Pierrot, remember that in me you always have a sincere friend."

With these words she stretched out her hand to him, and Pierrot kissed it respectfully. She turned away to hide her tears, and Pierrot, much affected, left and joined his new friend Tristemplète. In a minute they were on



horseback, and in the time you could say "Jack Robinson" they were at the Chinese camp. Tristemplète never travelled at any slower pace than this.

As soon as Pierrot arrived he heard fearful cries, and learnt that a battle was going on. He hurried forward full of energy. It was time!

All these events of which I have told you at such

length,—I mean the combat of Pierrot against the demons in Beelzebub's castle; his deliverance by Tristemplète; his audience with Vantripan; his interview with Bandoline, and journey to the Chinese camp, only occupied two hours. This was thanks to Tristemplète's mode of transport. We talk a great deal of our railways, and are



very proud of doing ten or twelve leagues an hour, whereas our ancestors were carried from one end of China to the other in a twinkling, and you know there are not less than 700 leagues between the two ends. We are like children who put their feet into their father's boots and then fancy themselves men. How much further progress we must make before we discover half the

science that was quite common in the time of Abraham and the magi of ancient Chaldea!

We left Horribilis and the Chinese just arrived at the Great Wall. They were saved from complete destruction by the laziness of the Tartars, who asked Kabardantes to let them rest a little. He, certain of the morrow's issue, willingly gave permission; and in the morning about eleven, after a good breakfast, he left his tent, and without troubling to make a long speech to his soldiers, he pointed out the wall to them and said,—

"We have got to go thither. Advance with confidence, Pierrot is not there!"

With this he led the way, and set an example by raising an enormous ladder against the wall. All the Tartars followed, and in a few minutes appeared on the top of the wall.

Horribilis, instead of consulting the safety of the army, thought of nothing but himself. He was having relays of horses prepared for himself and his suite. The generals, left without orders and incapable of acting themselves, also prepared for the retreat or rather for the flight; and the mass of the army, seized with panic, only waited to see the first Tartar appear, to bolt. When Kabardantes, standing on the top of the wall, uttered his war whoop and pounced down upon them, it was a case of who should turn his back to the enemy first. The Tartars rushed after them sword in hand, cutting and stabbing them, and taking many thousand prisoners;

the remainder, in full flight, uttered dreadful yells. Just at this moment Pierrot arrived on the battle-field.

I do not know if you have read the "Iliad," my children, but if not of course you will read it some day. You will then see how the invincible Achilles, alone and unarmed, stopped the victorious Trojans at the very gates of the Grecian camp. The sound of his terrible voice carried alarm to the heart of even Hector himself. Pierrot, who in war was equal to Achilles, and perhaps to Roland, used no other means than that of these famous heroes, to make the victorious Tartars retire.

"Forward!" he cried in a voice which could be heard by both armies. At this well-known sound the Chinese stopped suddenly, and seeing Pierrot turned round and faced the enemy.

"Forward!" cried Pierrot a second time.

At this the Chinese charged at the Tartars, who sustained the shock steadily.

"Forward!" cried Pierrot the third time, and now he himself plunged into the Tartar ranks.

When the enemy saw this and heard his command all took to flight. Kabardantes himself did not dare wait for his foe. They leapt from the top of the wall into the trenches, broke the ladders under their weight, and did not think themselves safe till they had put the wall between them and Pierrot. The latter did not wait to massacre the few stragglers who were not able to join the mass of the army quick enough; but he instantly

put the Chinese into battle array, and having now all his tower doors thrown open he rushed with the bravest of the army into the Tartar camp.

Here the fight became really terrific. The Tartars, a little recovered from their first panic, defended themselves courageously. Kabardantes, surrounded by his guards, every now and then made a sortie, and with the weight of his club knocked over, smashed, and mutilated all who opposed him, but at the sight of Pierrot he withdrew into the rank of his guards, who deployed in front of him.

Soon Pierrot rushed into the midst of the Tartars, struck off hundreds of heads right and left of him like a reaper cuts the ripe ears with his sickle, and at last found himself face to face with Kabardantes. The emperor of the Unknown Isles was, as we have seen, very brave; his strength was prodigious, and no one hitherto had dared oppose him; but when he saw Pierrot he grew pale and felt he had met his master. It was not that Pierrot was nearly so strong as he was; Kabardantes beat him in size and power, but in Pierrot's heart there was such indomitable and inexhaustible courage rising from a soul so stedfast and so sure of itself, that his very eye flashed with lightning in the battle, and no one could bear his gaze. He stared at Kabardantes, who then attacked him with his head held down.

Pierrot waited for him with his feet firmly planted. Kabardantes' club was about to descend on his head, but Pierrot cut it in two with a stroke of his sword, and only the stump remained in the giant's hand. Then in his turn Pierrot struck such a fearful blow at his enemy's head, that Kabardantes' helmet was smashed in two and fell to the ground. He repeated the blow with redoubled force, but the giant's skull was invulnerable; he was, however, stunned with the violence of the strokes, and stretched out his arms in front of him like a man about to fall.

At this the two armies stopped fighting and awaited the end of the combat that they might obey the victor. May Heaven prevent you, my children, ever being present at such a spectacle: though it was imposing, it was fearful. The lives of two men, and the destiny of two empires, depended, at that moment, on a sword cut. Pierrot was at a great disadvantage in fighting with an enemy who was invulnerable: this he knew, but it did not discourage him the least. He who had struggled with Beelzebub and his troop of demons without blanching, could not retire before a man. When he saw that his sword made no impression on the skin of Kabardantes, for it was more impenetrable than a crocodile's scales, he looked about for a fresh weapon.

If the giant had been less strong, Pierrot would have suffocated him in his arms; but he did not like to risk it, so he took three steps backwards, and seizing with both hands an enormous boulder, he was going to pitch it at Kabardantes to crush him, since he could not wound him. But just at that moment the giant recovered from his giddiness, and, perceiving Pierrot's design, he drew his scimitar, and threw himself on him. The scimitar had been given him by his mother, the sorceress Vautrika, and its blade, forged by the infernal spirits, was of such a fine temper that nothing could resist it. He aimed one furious blow at Pierrot, but he, quick as a swallow, avoided it, and the scimitar fell on to the trunk of an immense oak. The oak was cut in two as smoothly as a beard is shaved by a barber. It fell with great noise, and crushed more than fifty soldiers out of the two armies by its fall.

At this everybody moved away to make room for the two combatants.

Pierrot saw that if the fight were prolonged, his adversary, being more robust, better armed, and invulnerable, would be the conqueror: so he again took in his two hands the boulder just mentioned, and threw it with all his force at the giant's chest. The giant tottered and began spitting blood, and, at the same time, Pierrot noticed a remarkable thing, that blood trickled from his chest; from this he concluded that Kabardantes was not invulnerable, and took his cue accordingly. He seized from the hands of an astonished Tartar near by a long lance, and ran it into the pit of the giant's stomach; it penetrated to the heart, and Kabardantes fell dead.

All the spectators in the two armies, who up till this time had wavered between hope and fear, began to

breathe again: whoever were the conqueror they well knew his victory would decide all. I dare not say if Kabardantes' death excited great regret in the hearts of the Tartars; but it is certain that the Chinese uttered a long cry of joy when they saw their enemy fall.

"Victory and long life to Pierrot!" they cried from all sides.



The Tartar general, Trautmanchkof, took the command of his compatriots, and demanded a truce that they might bury their dead emperor. Pierrot at once allowed it, praised the enemy's courage, and graciously added that it only rested with the Tartars to change the truce into a long and lasting peace.

The two armies then parted, and each regained its own camp. The Chinese, wild with joy, did not know how to express their affection for good Pierrot. Each

one felt he had regained in Pierrot a protector, a father, a friend. When our hero asked what had become of Horribilis, they told him laughingly that he had taken the road to Pekin, and that at the rate he was going at when he left he must have arrived there by this time.

The other army was much divided in opinion. After the death of Kabardantes and Pantafilando there remained no heir to the throne; the dynasty was extinct; it was not much loss, for there are always more kings without subjects than subjects without kings. However, nothing is easier than to make a king—there was only the difficulty of choosing one. As the heads of the principal families were in camp, each of them offered himself as a candidate, and made much of his birth, fortune, and valour. The discussion was very lively; each of the orators had his sword in hand, and seemed disposed to maintain his right at all hazards. At last, one of the most aged, who, as it happened, had no claim to the throne, offered a piece of advice which all approved.

"Our emperor," he said, "must be the bravest of men, in order that he may be worthy to command the Tartars, who are, after the English, the bravest men in the world. He must have no family or connexion in the country, in order that he may not favour any one party at the expense of another. There is only one man who fulfils these two conditions."

[&]quot;Who is it?" they all cried with one voice.

[&]quot; Pierrot."

This proposal, by a curious accident, met with the approval of all. The throne was accordingly offered to Pierrot, but he refused.

"I am not worthy of it," was the modest reply.

The truth is that Pierrot, grown wise by experience, and knowing how difficult it is to govern men, was unwilling to engage himself in so ticklish a business.

"Let those try it," he would say, "who feel it to be their vocation; for my part I wish to live quietly and in complete repose with my family. I am very willing to fight for my country when she wants me, but I am not willing to rule over her. In such an office the cleverest makes a hundred blunders a day, and what should I do, being so stupid as I am? I would much rather work in peace, bring up my children, till the land, set a good example to those round me, and sometimes, though seldom, offer good advice to those who ask me for it honestly. Providence will see after the rest."

Perhaps my readers will think Pierrot a little egotistical. Old Alcofribas thinks him very wise, and approves of all he said. For my part I do not know what to say about it.

Pierrot's egotism was of a rare kind, that touches the purest virtue and highest disinterestedness; and it touches them so closely that really I find it difficult to distinguish between them. But all the same, on this subject, like in every other, opinions differ.

The Tartars were in no way discouraged by the first

refusal: on the contrary, made more anxious by the obstacle, as men generally are, they came back to their request, and at last asked Pierrot to choose a king of his making for them.

"For," said the speaker, "we can find none among us who commands the respect of all, and the choice will be the cause of civil wars."

"Well," said Pierrot, "proclaim a republic."

At this all began to speak at once, and each one gave his advice. The noise was deafening. One said a republic was anarchy, another that it was the government of great and wealthy men, another that it was the least wearisome form of government because of the perpetual changing of governments and systems, a fourth remarked that it suited European nations because they had aquiline noses, and would not suit Tartars because they were flat-nosed. Pierrot, quite deafened, went and took a walk.

On his return they had chosen a monarchy, and Trautmanchkof was nominated emperor. He at once made peace with Pierrot, gave up his Chinese prisoners, and left for Kraktaktah, in order to be recognized as sovereign.

Pierrot, having accomplished his task, and had the Great Wall repaired, left the command of the army in the hand of skilled warriors, and went back to Vantripan.

The fame of his exploits had preceded him. The king came to receive him at the foot of the grand staircase in

the principal courtyard. He embraced him tenderly, placed him on his right hand during dinner, and drank more than six bottles to his health, proclaiming him the conqueror of the Tartars, the saviour of China, and the worthy object of the world's admiration.

This fat Vantripan was a good man at heart, and well knew how much he owed to Pierrot. As for the latter, he



thought of nothing but of rejoining his beloved Rosine, and at last revelling in the repose he had so well earned.

At last the much wished-for day arrived. Pierrot left the court alone, mounted on Fendlair, who snorted, danced, and galloped, as if he understood his master's joy.

He reached the gate of the farm. Rosine did not expect him for some days later, because he did not wish his

arrival announced, so she was in her morning négligé costume. But this négligé, my dear friends, would have been the envy of the greatest and fairest princesses if they could have understood its coquettish simplicity. Hear the description the wise Alcofribas gives of it.

"She was dressed," he says, "in a white stuff robe, simple and plain. This robe, made by herself, hung naturally round her figure, like the drapery covering the statues of the Roman empresses: but you will well understand the superiority a living and animate nature, breathing in one of the most beautiful creatures that has charmed men's eves since the time of Eve, had over the artist who sculptured in inanimate marble, and tried by the force of his genius to reproduce some feeble representation of eternal beauty. Her waist, slender and unrestrained by corsets, gave an incomparable and most natural grace to her gait. A red ribbon round her neck set off its complexion, which was white, rose-tinted, and almost transparent. Her hair, simply tied, like that of the huntress Diana, fell over her shoulders in charming disorder."

Perhaps you think that Alcofribas only gives a slight idea of the beauty he wishes to describe, and that his comparisons drawn from sculpture and antiquity are a little obscure for those who have not seen the Louvre. My children, you are right, but no man is perfect or complete in everything. Old Alcofribas had passed the whole of his life in the study of science, and he had neglected literature a little.

Newton's binomial theorem was more familiar to him than rhetoric, and the palæontological discoveries of Cuvier are not the thousandth part of the things which the old magician had discovered and published in those mysterious books which were burnt in former times by the order of the savage Gengis-Khan, and of which the last example was discovered in the ruins of Samarcand, six months ago, by a friend of mine, who had gone to visit the shores of the Oxus.

Oh, if you only knew the great, beautiful, profound, and mysterious conceptions contained in this admirable work, unique in the history of the world up till this time, you would instantly take route for Strasbourg, from there you would go to Vienna, half of the way by diligence, half by railway, thence to Constantinople by land, thence to Scutari by sea, thence to Damascus with the caravans of Mecca pilgrims, thence to Bussorah by camels across the desert of Mesopotamia; from Bussorah, which is on the Tigris, to Herat, on foot or on horseback, in a carriage or a balloon, as most convenient; from Herat to the Iron Gates which guard the entrance to Khorassan, and thence to the Oxus and Samarcand, the capital of the Sogdian country.

When at the end of your journey, you will enter the great caravansary, taking good care to announce yourself as one of the savants come from Europe, which will prevent curiosity and suspicion.

You will cross the whole length of the caravansary

End of Pierrot's History.

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twice; you will recross its breadth twice; then you will follow a diagonal line, between the two most distant extremities of the building, for it is irregular in shape. You must take care to pronounce at every ninth step these two words, kara brankara, which are, as I told you, a consecrated magic formula. Then leave the caravansary and take the first street to the left, which is Rahkhr



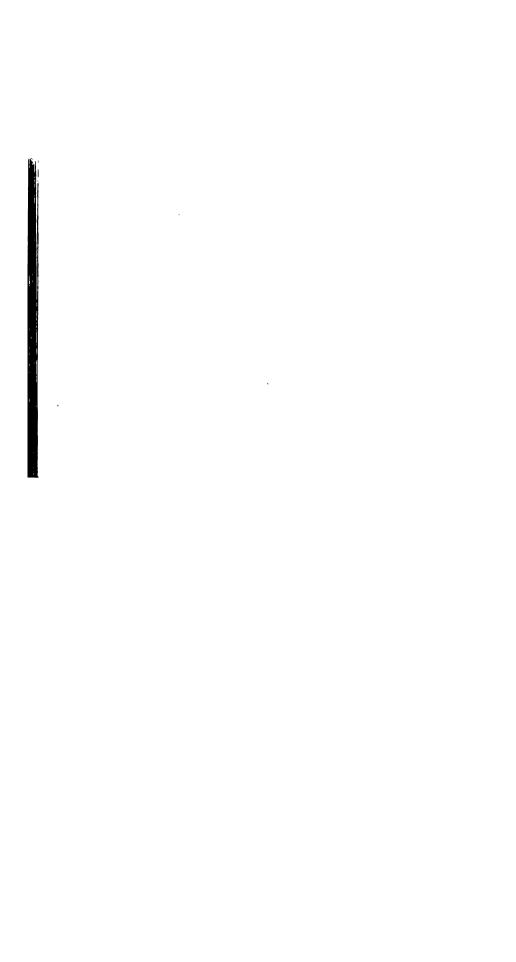
Street (Rahkhr, in Tartar, means beggar) and there you will find twelve old men with white beards, sitting on the ground in a circle, with their legs crossed.

They will be looking in one another's heads and hair for that little animal which torments Neapolitan beggars so much. When they find one they give a look of satisfaction and crack it between the thumbs. Don't stop to talk to them or help them—it is useless—but



Old Alcofribas had passed the whole of his life in the study of science.

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follow the second street to the right, the first to the left, the third to the right, the second to the left, the fourth to the left and right. There you will take the first to the left, and you will stop before a house which has nothing to distinguish it from the others.

Don't go any further; that's the place.

You will then enter a dark passage, mount a flight of stairs, traverse a long corridor, mount another flight, and enter an antichamber, which opens on to a staircase; go down six steps, and then knock on the wall; then go down six steps more; then go up nine steps, and you will find yourself opposite a secret door, of which you have not got the key. You need not trouble to fetch the porter, for



it has no lock. You will say, "This is not what I am looking for." Go up three steps more, and you will be in an anti-chamber.

There no footman will come to take your hat and gloves, but you will see a hand in the air, and with no visible body attached to it, beckoning you with its finger to follow it. The hand is knotty and wrinkled; it is the hand of old Alcofribas.

It will make you a sign to enter an enormous cabinet, which the old magician's servant has swept all these six hundred years, by his master's orders. Don't stop to look at the globes and astronomical maps that you will see drawn on the walls: go straight to the table where the hand directs you, and touch the spring of a cedarwood box. The box will open, and you will see the famous manuscript, written in the language of the ancient Sogdians, which no one has spoken since the time of Cyrus.

You will make a sign that you don't understand it, and the hand will make a sign that you are an idiot, and pitch you out at the door. When you reach the street you can go back to London, if you like, unless you prefer to decipher the inscription left by King Gustasp (he lived about three thousand years ago) on his palace walls, the ruins of which are at Samarcand.

Here, perhaps, you will ask what is the use of such a long voyage, if after all you cannot understand the language of old Alcofribas?

My children, you are so good that I cannot help telling you the whole truth. What is the use of everything in the world? why, to pass the time, or, if you like, to kill time, till time is over. There are people who have been round the world seven or eight times, with no other object than to see the end of the sixty years Heaven allows them, as soon as possible.

Do you think it is nothing to have seen Strasbourg,

Vienna, Constantinople, Damascus, Bussorah, the Iron Gates, Samarcand, and the land of Alcofribas? The voyage there and back would not take less than twelve months. In that year you would have had a strong desire, a regular passion, and it is that which keeps men alive and sustains them; for, feeble creatures as we are, we have within ourselves no principle of life; everything comes from outside us, and God has willed it so, in order to make us turn to Him in all things.

But it is time to change the subject. I am beginning to preach, and you, I expect, to yawn. Let us go on with Pierrot's history. It is getting towards the end, for as old Alcofribas finely says, "There's nothing more insipid or more wearisome than describing happiness." And Pierrot had, at last, deserved to be happy.

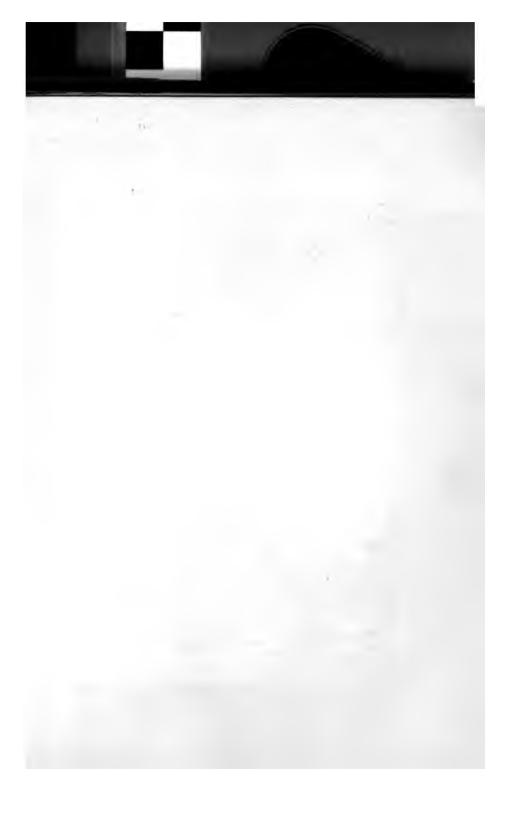
I shall not repeat his conversation with Rosine to you. You will well understand that it would be very interesting, because they both had as much intellect as angels, and there was no lack of subjects for them to converse about. Let it be enough for you to know that Rosine's mother had to go and look for them herself, and remind them that breakfast had been served an hour before.

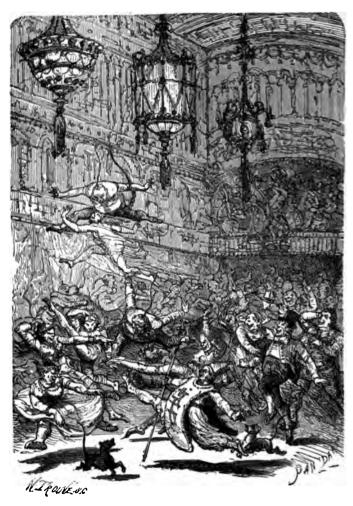
Two days after, King Vantripan arrived, accompanied by his daughter, who wished to assist at Pierrot's marriage, and thus prove her friendship to him. For his part, Pierrot only wished for an occasion of showing his devotion, and this was not long in coming, as we shall tell in the proper place.



On the morrow the contract was signed. Pierrot's father and mother arrived, straight from the Ardennes by the road in the air, on which road they had followed the fairy Aurora. I will leave you to imagine the joy and the caresses of the happy family. The marriage took place in Rosine's mother's house. Then there met pell-mell, kings, princesses of the blood royal, burgesses, peasants, soldiers,

and a bishop, Monsignor de Bankok, from the kingdom





The orchestra of the genii, led by the private conductor of music to King Solomon, gave a magnificent ball.

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of Siam, who himself pronounced the nuptial blessing on the two lovers.

The fairy Aurora managed the whole thing, and after the feast, thanks to her efforts, the orchestra of the genii, led by the private conductor of music to King Solomon, gave a magnificent ball.

Thus end the adventures of Pierrot. "I hope," says old Alcofribas, "they have not seemed too long."

I shall not tell you about the rest of Pierrot's life, for it was very quiet.

Only one accident troubled its course, but that accident was not followed by disagreeable consequences.

Prince Horribilis, anxious to mount the throne, revolted against his father with a portion of the army. Vantripan, in a fright, went for shelter to Pierrot, who received him with open arms, and, without giving him time for explanation, mounted his horse and rode against the rebels. As soon as they saw him they threw down their arms and begged for mercy. Pierrot pardoned them, and made Horribilis surrender.

Vantripan wanted to impale him, but Pierrot, who had a horror of tortures, and whose character, naturally generous, was softened still more by contact with that of Rosine, obtained pardon for him, and contented himself with making the king send his son into exile.

Horribilis, a few days after, was taken by the Tartars and hanged on a tree with his friend Tristemplète. This event no one was sorry for.



Two years after Vantripan died, leaving his throne to his daughter; she wanted to entrust the government to Pierrot, but he thanked her for the honour, and declined to leave his retreat.

All the same, she often came to him for advice, and when Trautmanchkof,, the emperor of the Tartars, tried to break the peace, he retreated to the depth of his deserts on the mere rumour that Pierrot had been nominated commander of the Chinese army.

Thus, though he was nothing more than a private indi-

vidual, and did not wish to be anything else, Pierrot

really governed the kingdom by his virtue, his experience, and courage. He lived a long life, spending his fortune, which Vantripan's liberality had made very large, in founding schools and libraries, constructing canals, repairing the main roads, and making agricultural experiments, the results of which he published in order that the world might profit by them.

It was he who invented drainage, which the French found out twelve years ago, and attributed to themselves. No doubt he invented many things which other people re-invented later, as I will prove to the public when I have finished my translation of the famous manuscript of Alcofribas, which is hidden in the house at Samarcand.

My readers will then see what a man Pierrot was, and how he profited by the fairy Aurora's teaching.

His name is still celebrated in China and the vast empire of the Unknown Isles: thence it was carried to Europe by Plancarpin, who heard him spoken of in the suburbs of Karakorum, and many fables got mixed up with the veracious history I have just been telling you.

"Never believe," says old Alcofribas, "that Pierrot was ever a glutton, a coward, a liar, or a humbug, or buffoon, as silly people, whose only object is to make you laugh, often represent him to be. No doubt they confuse him with false Pierrots unworthy to carry his honourable name. For my part, I only seek to tell the

. End of Pierrot's History.

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truth, and I can assure you that Pierrot lived like a good citizen, and died like a saint."

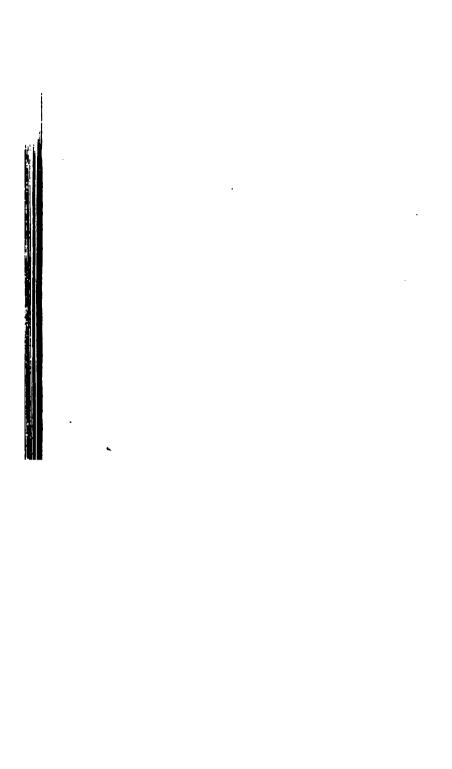
And I recommend my readers to do the same themselves.







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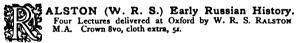
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